

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Interior



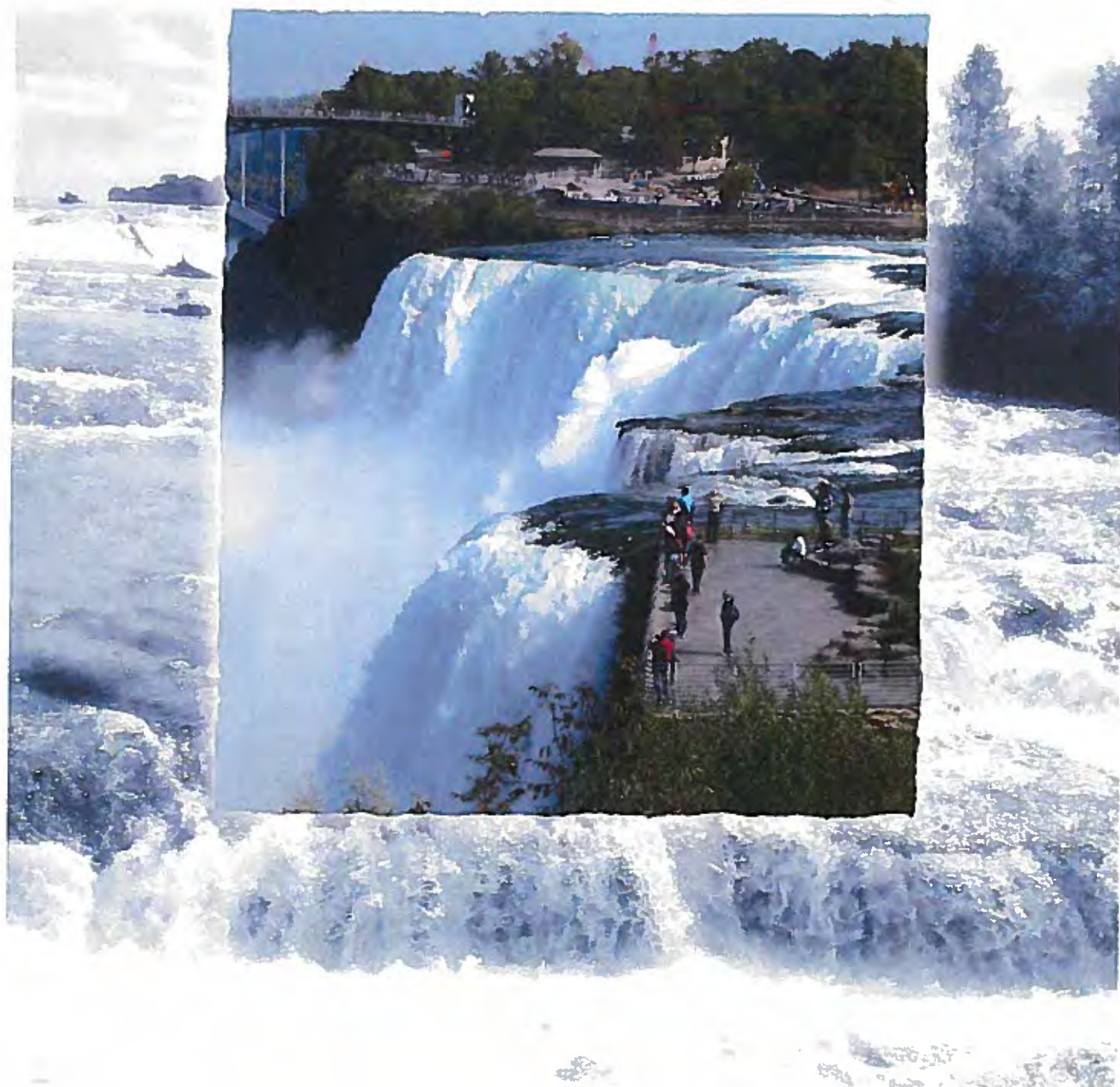
NIAGARA  
FALLS  
NATIONAL  
HERITAGE  
AREA



# Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

## Long-Range Interpretive Plan

October 2013



Prepared by  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Northeast Region

Harpers Ferry Center  
Interpretive Planning

The power and magnitude of Niagara Falls is both overwhelming and deeply imbedded in popular consciousness. Photo credit: NHA

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Long-Range Interpretive Plan

# Table of Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Message from the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. Board of Directors | 2 |
| The Planning Process   | 4 |

## **Part One: The Foundation for Interpretive Planning**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Authorizing Legislation                               | 7  |
| Purpose   | 7  |
| Significance  | 8  |
| Interpretive Themes                                   | 11 |
| Interpretive Management Goals                         | 13 |
| Desired Visitor Experience                            | 15 |
| Audiences   | 16 |
| Challenges and Opportunities Affecting Interpretation | 19 |
| Existing Conditions                                   | 20 |

## **Part Two: Actions/Recommendations**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Goals for Interpretation and Education | 25 |
| Implementation Plan                    | 38 |

## **Part Three: Appendices**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Appendix A: The Planning Team   | 47 |
| Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines                                      | 49 |
| Appendix C: Works Cited   | 49 |
| Appendix D: Public Law 110-220 Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 | 50 |
| Appendix E: Interpretive Theme Matrix                                     | 60 |

# Message

## Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. Board of Directors

Niagara Falls is considered by many people to be a “must see” destination. Annually more than eight million visitors explore the American side of the Falls. Few, however, go beyond the immediate vicinity of the falls, limiting the potential economic impacts upon local and regional communities. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will work with partners to create a world class visitor experience along the Niagara River and Gorge to attract visitors, encourage them to explore the length of the river from LaSalle to Lake Ontario, and provide benefits to the local and regional economy. National Heritage Area initiatives will strengthen communities, engage residents, and recognize, preserve, and enhance the region’s significant natural and cultural resources.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan is a document that sharpens our focus and pulls together all of the education and interpretation efforts within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Part One defines the interpretive themes, identifies the desired visitor experience, lists issues and challenges, and describes the existing condition of the national heritage area (NHA)’s interpretive services. Part Two lists the specific actions the NHA and its partners will take to meet our vision for the future of interpretation over the next five to seven years.

The NHA Commission sunset in May and in June 2013, the National Heritage Area transitioned to a non-profit status. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. is managed by a Board of Directors and daily oversight is the responsibility of the Executive Director.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is supported through partnerships with many local, regional, and national organizations. The staff engaged all of the original Commissioners, partners, local community members, and many others throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort produced a more comprehensive and inclusive look at how we will interpret the NHA for the enjoyment and understanding of future visitors.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we hope you will take time to review this important plan and join us as we continue to move forward in our efforts to preserve and protect the values and resources of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Sincerely,

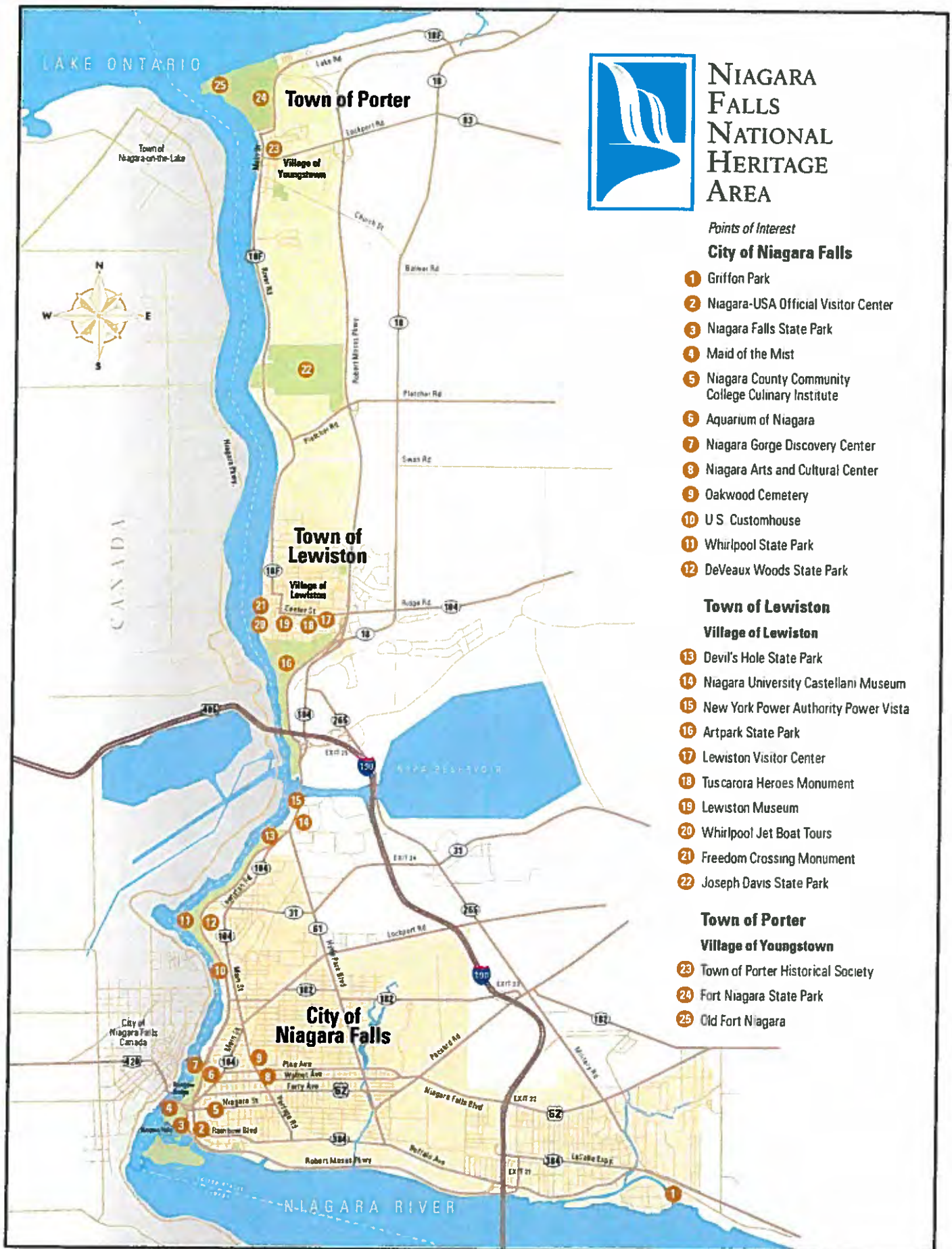


Dr. Thomas Chambers  
President  
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc.



NIAGARA  
FALLS  
NATIONAL  
HERITAGE  
AREA





# **NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA**

## *Points of Interest*

### **City of Niagara Falls**

- 1 Griffon Park
- 2 Niagara-USA Official Visitor Center
- 3 Niagara Falls State Park
- 4 Maid of the Mist
- 5 Niagara County Community College Culinary Institute
- 6 Aquarium of Niagara
- 7 Niagara Gorge Discovery Center
- 8 Niagara Arts and Cultural Center
- 9 Oakwood Cemetery
- 10 U S Customhouse
- 11 Whirlpool State Park
- 12 DeVeaux Woods State Park

### **Town of Lewiston**

#### **Village of Lewiston**

- 13 Devil's Hole State Park
- 14 Niagara University Castellani Museum
- 15 New York Power Authority Power Vista
- 16 Artpark State Park
- 17 Lewiston Visitor Center
- 18 Tuscarora Heroes Monument
- 19 Lewiston Museum
- 20 Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours
- 21 Freedom Crossing Monument
- 22 Joseph Davis State Park

### **Town of Porter**

#### **Village of Youngstown**

- 23 Town of Porter Historical Society
- 24 Fort Niagara State Park
- 25 Old Fort Niagara

## The Planning Process

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. National Heritage Area commissioners, staff, partners, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Our goal is to promote the National Heritage Area's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

The LRIP recommends actions that should occur over the next five to seven years. It identifies themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal

interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the purpose, significance and themes. The planning process has been customized to meet the requirements of NPS Director's Order 6 and the needs for the National Heritage Area, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

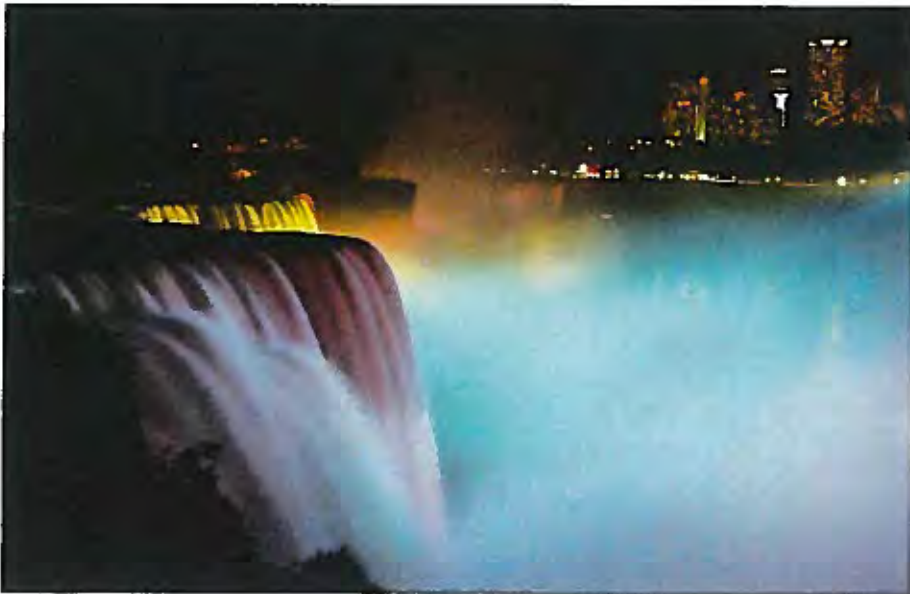
A scoping trip was conducted on January 22-23, 2013. A Foundation workshop was held on January 23, 2013 with the National Heritage Area Commission and a second workshop was held on January 24, 2013 with partners and stakeholders. A Recommendations workshop was held on March 20, 2013 and participants included NHA commissioners, staff, partners, and stakeholders. On May 7, 2013, a small workgroup met to chart the Implementation Strategy.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

In January 2013, National Heritage Area Commissioners began work on the LRIP.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo







Niagara Falls is significant to the nation as a natural wonder and as the site of key events in American history.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



Education programs are providing opportunities to students to learn about the NHA's historical significance.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



Making historical connections across the Niagara River with Canada is a key objective of the NHA.  
Photo credit: Niagara Falls Public Library



# *Part 1* Foundation for Interpretive Planning





## Authorizing Legislation

Congress designated the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area on May 8, 2008 in Subtitle B of Public Law 110-229 (Appendix D). The legislation established boundaries for the National Heritage Area and designated that a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission be created as the local coordinating entity for the heritage area. In May 2013, the NHA transitioned to a new local coordinating entity, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc., a 501c3 organization described in the 2012 Management Plan.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area encompasses the City of Niagara Falls and a corridor of land extending north from the city along the east side of the Niagara River to Lake Ontario, including the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, and portions of the Towns of Niagara, Lewiston, and Porter.

In addition, the National Heritage Area may include “thematically-related sites located in Niagara and Erie Counties, New York, which connect to the National Heritage Area’s four interpretive themes; wish to participate in the heritage area program; and meet heritage area guidelines and criteria.”

## Purpose

Purpose statements describe why an area was set aside, what specific purposes exist for a heritage area, and are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making.

According to the 2012 Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan, the purposes for which the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was created, as



delineated in Section 421 of the authorizing legislation, are to:

- 1) Recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled Niagara National Heritage Area Study dated 2005;
- 2) Preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area;
- 3) Promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;

Niagara Falls NHA interprets important historical events and geographic locations along the Niagara River from LaSalle to Lake Ontario. Photo credit: Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

Cannon firing demonstrations at Old Fort Niagara immerse visitors in history. Photo credit: NHA Photo



4) Recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;

5) Enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, County, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area;

6) Conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy; and

7) Provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

The history and stories of the Tuscarora Nation are revealed in an exhibit at the Robert Moses Power Plant  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



## Significance

Statements of significance describe the area's distinctive natural, cultural, and recreational resources and values that are the specific rationale for national recognition of the site.

According to the 2012 Management Plan, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is significant for the following reasons:

The Niagara Falls and Gorge are rich in beauty and in stories. They are significant to the nation as a natural wonder and as the site of key events in American history. The narrative of the Falls speaks to Native American, Colonial, European, and African American experiences in the region, and to the ascendancy and legacy of hydroelectric power in the United States. Nature, parks, trails, museums, urban neighborhoods, towns, and power plants are the physical components of the region that help people experience and absorb this history.

In the late seventeenth century when Father Hennepin of France beheld the Falls and provided the world with the first written account of its dramatic landscape, Iroquois Confederacy and Algonquin tribes lived in the region and French and English fur traders operated there. During the eighteenth century French and British forces fought over control of the area and its access to the Ohio River Valley, the Great Lakes, and the interior of the continent. Fort Niagara, originally erected by the French in 1726 or earlier, became an English stronghold following the French and Indian War.



At the end of the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris (1783) awarded the eastern side of the Niagara River to the United States and established the international boundary between the United States and British territory down the center of the Niagara River, although British forces continued to occupy the Fort Niagara until after the Jay Treaty (1794). Following the establishment of treaties with the Iroquois within the region, American settlers began moving into the region. The Tuscarora Reservation, established in 1797, remains today to the east of the Gorge and north of the City of Niagara Falls.

The international boundary was bitterly contested but maintained during the War of 1812. The construction of the Erie Canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River and New York City during the early nineteenth century, an engineering success story, diminished the importance of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as a transportation corridor and with it the Lower Niagara River and portage around the Falls. The completion of the canal in 1825 and construction of the railroad to Niagara Falls in 1838 made the Falls, the largest waterfall in North America, dramatically more accessible and a tourist destination.

With the rise of tourism in the early nineteenth century came hotels, museums, tours, boat rides, souvenirs, and outrageous stunts – tightrope walkers crossing the Gorge on wires and people in barrels going over

the Falls. Over time Niagara Falls became one of America's major travel destinations for families and for couples on their honeymoons. Uninhibited commercialism inspired a group of influential individuals led by Frederic Law Olmsted to lobby for preservation and restoration of Niagara Falls. After 15 years of effort the Niagara appropriations bill was signed into law in 1885, creating the Niagara Reservation. (Now the nation's oldest state park.) The process through which the state park was conserved and made available free of charge to visitors supported a national movement to use public money for the protection of land as public parks, and helped inspire the creation of the National Park Service.

Prior to the American Civil War, the Underground Railroad routed fugitives to the Buffalo Niagara region because of its proximity to Canada, where slavery had been abolished in 1833. Individuals and families escaping enslavement crossed the Niagara River to Canada and freedom. The village of Suspension Bridge, now within the City of Niagara Falls, was the site of John Roebling's phenomenal 1855 bridge that proved the feasibility of suspension bridge technology for both railroad and vehicle traffic. His bridge became a major crossing point of the Underground Railroad in the years before the war. Others crossed the river by boat from Lewiston and Youngstown, by bridge from Lewiston after its construction in 1851, and even by swimming.



Construction of the penstocks for the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Power and Manufacturing Company Power Station #3 in 1907. Photo credit: Niagara Falls Public Library

The nineteenth century brought pioneers of a different kind to Niagara Falls. Innovative entrepreneurs and industrialists began to harness the water power of the Niagara River in the mid-1800s, and water-powered factories and mills were constructed along the river, gorge, and canals. In the 1880s, the emerging technology of hydroelectric generation heralded a transformation in American life. Niagara Falls was the scene of an intense and high-stakes competition in hydroelectric technology involving such names as Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and Kelvin. Entrepreneurs constructed the first large-scale hydroelectric power plants with the capability of generating large amounts of electricity. Emerging electrothermic and electrochemical industries requiring amounts of power not before possible were drawn to Niagara Falls, which soon became an industrial center and the cutting edge location for industries that transformed twentieth century life.

Large modern factories were constructed along the Niagara River and Gorge. The city expanded with an influx of white collar managers and blue collar workers

of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Utopian visions at the dawn of the era of electricity predicted a gleaming future of plenty. Niagara Falls was to be the model city of the twentieth century.

Niagara Falls grew rapidly as an industrial center and a center of technology and innovation. By mid-century, however, new realities set in. Revolutionary developments in product creation by industry from the early 1900s through the 1940s led to intense environmental degradation with the potential for significant harm to human health and the environment. Beginning in the 1960s with changes in technology, widespread availability of electricity from other power sources, and the transfer of manufacturing to overseas locations, plants began to close down, jobs were lost, and the population began to decline as people moved elsewhere for work. The link between hazardous waste and human health became evident, and conditions in Niagara Falls led directly to the awakening of a national environmental awareness and the development of governmental programs for brownfield remediation.

Today the City of Niagara Falls and nearby communities are working hard and successfully towards building a new economy – one based upon service and tourism industries. The National Heritage Area, by protecting and illuminating the many natural, historical, and cultural treasures of the community, is one of several important initiatives in the region focused upon revitalizing the local economy and community.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are an organizational tool. They provide the conceptual framework for all aspects of interpretive programming. Themes are derived from legislation and purpose and capture the essence of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's significance. Themes are specifically linked to a place and its stories and explain why that area was included within the National Heritage Area system.

While themes are important as the framework to guide interpretation and management decisions, they are not intended for public use. They are the internal infrastructure and measure to focus and develop visitor experiences and interpretive and educational services and programming.

According to the 2012 Management Plan, the interpretive themes for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area are:

### ***Natural Phenomenon***

Niagara Falls is a natural phenomenon that is overwhelming in its magnitude and deeply embedded in popular consciousness. Over Niagara Falls courses the outflow of four of the Great Lakes. The distinctive characteristics of the Niagara Falls region can only be understood through appreciation of this unparalleled resource and the geological processes that form it. (2.29)

### ***Tourism and Recreation***

Niagara Falls has been an international cultural icon with different meaning and



significance to different people over time. (2.31)

### ***Power and Industry***

Niagara Falls was the place where the large-scale generation of electricity was first undertaken with tremendous implications for changes in the American way of life. (2.36)

### ***Borderland/Border Crossing***

The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character. Because the Borderland/Border Crossing theme reflects the breadth of human interaction within the Niagara Region, five sub-themes reveal significant events that shaped the course of history. (2.38)

Along the Niagara River the first large-scale generation of electricity was undertaken.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



Each year, thousands of students engage in history by visiting Old Fort Niagara. Photo Credit: NHA Photo

### The Western Door

Haudenosaunee means “People who are building an extended house” and refers to the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, the most powerful Native American influence east of the Mississippi. As the westernmost of the Six Nations, the Seneca were known as the “Keepers of the Western Door.”

### Clash of Empires

The Niagara River was of international strategic significance as the gateway to the interior of the North American continent by way of Great Lakes. This route gave French forces access from the St. Lawrence River Valley to the Ohio, Illinois, and Mississippi River Valleys, and restricted British access to the continent’s interior.

### Revolutionary Frontier

During the American Revolution, the British base at Fort Niagara served as a safe haven for those loyal to the British, whether European settlers or Haudenosaunee villagers, and a base for offensive operations against colonial settlements on the frontier.

### War of 1812

As a boundary between the United States and British-held Canada, the Niagara River was a scene of conflict in which residents became deeply engaged. At least five major battles occurred near the river’s 35-mile length, but the border returned to its pre-war status. Villages on both sides were burned. The British occupied Fort Niagara and neutralized the countryside south to Buffalo.

### Underground Railroad/Crossing the Niagara Gorge

The Niagara River and Gorge was an important crossing point into Canada for fugitives following the Underground Railroad. For the fugitive freedom seekers who passed through the Niagara Frontier, the physical act of crossing the Niagara River represented the final act of courage and determination at the end of a long, arduous journey.

Appendix E is an Interpretive Theme Matrix that describes each theme statement using examples of concepts/ideas appropriate to the theme and examples of topics and stories that fit within each theme.



## Interpretive Management Goals

The primary goal of Interpretation and Education within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, according to the 2012 Management Plan, is to:

Assure the creation of a high quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources and environments in the Niagara region.

The following goals (also identified in the 2012 Management Plan) reflect how interpretation and education will support the above broader management goal with an emphasis on helping people understand the value of the resource and fostering a sense of stewardship:

- Collaborate with partners to develop an interpretive framework and plan that connects attractions, reaches a wide range of audiences, and nurtures public appreciation for the region's communities, cultures, resources and environments.
- Identify an interpretive hub and linkages for each of the four themes; stimulate coordinated landscape exhibits for each; and support partners' related interior programming.
- Support partners in implementing their sites' portions of the interpretive plan, beginning with a core program, with other experiences phased in over time.

- Assist local partners in establishing and supporting a central database of materials, publications and artifacts related to interpretive subjects and encourage scholarly research.



- Establish the Niagara River corridor from LaSalle to Lake Ontario as a regional interpretive connector to places and programs throughout Niagara and Erie counties and the Niagara Region of Canada.
- Provide interpretive content to visitors through easily accessible social media and other technological formats.

The NHA will be exploring how to sustain outreach to the next generation of stewards and friends.  
Photo credit: NHA Photo



Visitors can feel the power and energy of the Niagara River year-round. Photo credit: NHA Photo

- Establish a comprehensive graphic identity, including signage, publications, website, and promotional materials. Materials related to each of the four themes would have identifiably distinct appearances coordinated within the same format (using elements such as color or icons).
- Operate a central interpretive center with exhibits introducing the heritage area themes.
- Plan and implement a comprehensive system of landscape interpretive exhibits (within) an extensive system of trails along the Gorge and in communities.
- Establish a comprehensive system of interpretive programs that can be delivered effectively with all audiences.
- Help visitors, neighbors, communities, and elected officials better understand the National Heritage Area boundaries, mission, and management challenges while fostering a sense of stewardship.
- Support citizen health and fitness with appropriate recreational opportunities.
- Develop a strategy to provide year-round interpretive and educational opportunities.
- Explore how to sustain outreach to underserved populations and the next generation of stewards and friends.

Additional goals identified since the 2012 Management Plan was approved:

- Identify a blend of traditional and new interpretive techniques and media that will communicate



## Desired Visitor Experience

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

According to the 2012 Management Plan, the primary visitor experience goal for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is to:

Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with transformational experiences.

During the January 2013 workshops, participants brainstormed this list of desired experiences to articulate and describe the primary vision of the management goal.

Visitors to Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will have opportunities to:

- Feel the power and energy of the water.
- Explore the Niagara River, Falls, and Gorge as well as Lake Ontario from the American and Canadian sides, at different points, and in different ways.
- Discover the major themes and attractions within the NHA at a gateway location and receive expert advice on how to experience them.
- Hear, experience, interact with, and discover the authentic cultural history and natural wonders of the NHA.
- Discover the less well-known history and sites within the area.
- Experience the unique ecology of the Niagara Gorge.
- Meet the people and explore the diverse communities and culture of the area.
- Engage in activities to develop an appreciation for the human history and natural environment.
- Receive advance access to maps and orientation information through a variety of media, in a variety of locations, including websites, exhibits at transportation centers, and published guides that will assist in trip planning to the NHA to maximize the visitors time, enjoyment, and understanding of the resources.
- Safely enjoy a variety of accessible, sustainable, recreational experiences.
- Drive, hike, ride, and bike the entire length of the NHA from LaSalle to Lake Ontario.
- “Taste Niagara” and experience local flavors.
- Make a spiritual connection and go on a journey of personal history and faith.
- Cross the international borders into Canada and sovereign Native American nations.
- Experience the NHA in all four seasons.

## Audiences

In order to design the most effective interpretive and educational programming as well as employ the most effective techniques, national heritage areas must identify intended audiences, both existing audiences who actively visit the NHA (onsite and virtually) and potential new audiences that well-planned services may encourage. Because different audiences have varied needs and expectations, specific interpretive and educational strategies and methods should be developed to meet the needs of each. Sites will always provide services to existing and general audiences, but, some audience groups will receive focused attention in the short-term as “targeted audiences” because they may require different types of efforts or need specific methods to open or sustain communications and relationships, or the group may be inadequately served by existing interpretive programming.

### Current Audiences:

Over 8 million visitors come to the Niagara Falls State Park annually (New York Office of Parks 2013). Peak visitation occurs between June and August when the most variety of interpretive, educational, and concessions services are offered and the highly popular attractions like the Maid of the Mist and the Cave of the Winds are open. The spring and fall “shoulder seasons” also attract many visitors to the area and many resources are open year-round. During the winter, weather conditions may limit access to certain sites within the NHA. Only about 21% of the visitors stay overnight. The area is primarily considered as a day trip rather than a destination visit.

The Falls, located at the southern end of the NHA, is the most visited area. Old Fort Niagara is located 12 miles away at the northern end. In 2012, 92,000 visitors went into Old Fort Niagara. While this figure represents a 31% increase over 2011 (70,000), it is less than 1% of the number that visit the Falls (Emerson 2013).

Old Fort Niagara is located within the Fort Niagara State Park. Many of the 350,000 people visiting the State Park do not go to the Fort. Instead, they enjoy the recreational resources available such as the pool, picnic area, fishing launch, the nature center and soccer fields. In between the Falls and the Fort, Artpark and Whirlpool State Parks attract approximately 250,000 visitors annually. Deveau Woods seems to attract the nearby local residents more than out of town visitors with an annual visitation of approximately 90,000. (New York Office of Parks 2013)

The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report indicated a large population center within Niagara County (210,000+) and more than 70,000 total residents within the City of Niagara Falls, Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, and the Towns of Lewiston and Porter. The census report also revealed that the City of Niagara Falls is the most racially diverse locality within the NHA.

### Targeted Audiences:

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan recognizes that interpretive and educational techniques and audiences are intimately connected. It is important to recognize that all audiences are welcome and invited to participate; some techniques are better adapted to, or appeal

to, particular audiences. National Heritage Areas seek to appeal to a wide range of visitors of varied backgrounds and ages with different motivations for visiting.

Targeted new audiences will receive focused attention because they are either inadequately served by existing interpretation, need different strategies for engagement, or require specific methods to open or sustain communications and relationships. Factors to consider when developing interpretive and educational programs and services include the life experiences of the individual or group, level of education, learning styles, language, cultural traditions, time available for interaction, and others.

#### *Heritage Tourists*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation describes heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.” Heritage tourists may include single adults, family groups, and others who are seeking authentic, high-quality interpretive and educational programs and services.

#### *Education Groups*

Education groups may include students from pre-school to senior citizens. Life-long learning opportunities must be beyond traditional elementary and secondary school models to include adults as well as children. Transportation and time constraints make it challenging for students to travel to the sites and resources within the NHA — even those that may be within walking distance of the school. Distance learning

opportunities and working through partners may be options to expand the NHA’s educational outreach to these students. Public schools within the City of Niagara Falls represent economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse communities that may also be potential new audiences.

#### *Multi-generational Families*

Existing programs and media may not significantly address the interests of the growing diverse multi-cultural populations living within the Western New York region. Pro-active outreach that recognizes these audiences may not currently find relevance with the significant stories. They may speak multiple languages and have different cultural and spiritual needs that will need to be addressed to ensure that they have a meaningful and safe visit. Planning programs and services that incorporate how these groups use these types of venues (multi-generational families, larger group size, picnicking and family-time, etc.) will help attract these audiences to the area and insure they have a desirable experience.

#### *Local/Boundary (25 mile radius)*

##### *American and Canadian Visitors*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many locals living within the designated boundary of the NHA and within a 25-mile radius of the NHA visit the attraction destinations only when friends or family are in town and go to the areas within the Gorge or along the lower river to avoid crowds and paying entrance fees. Some may not be able to afford the entrance fees and as a result do not go to any of the events, programs, or use any of



the resources or services. Some of these visitors may not even know that they live within or adjacent to the National Heritage Area. The NHA will need to explore a variety of outreach methods to effectively engage and promote stewardship with these local residents.

### *Virtual Audiences*

Virtual audiences are using a variety of electronic devices. They are looking for stories, conversation, community, trip planning, current conditions, and emergency alerts using a variety of social and digital media. Since this trend is likely to accelerate, the NHA will need to develop strategies to use emerging technologies to reach these audiences in cost effective and sustainable ways.

### *Youth*

Current studies reflect national trends indicating that youth are disconnected from nature and the outdoors. This disconnect may be a result of fear, health-related issues, competition for time, family history/diversity/ethnicity, or lack of access. Exploring ways to effectively engage

youth through service-learning projects, organized groups, and within family units will ultimately create opportunities for them to become future employees, stewards, advocates, voters, and decision makers.

### *Group Tours*

Visitors participating in group tours may come from the U.S. or international destinations. Three key defining features of this audience are that they often travel by bus, require a high level of personal service, and have a very specific period of time to visit the site. This audience may be a frequent user of step-on guide services. The site may be asked to accommodate these visitors outside of regularly scheduled operating hours. There may be opportunities to provide orientation and interpretive videos that can be shown while traveling to the site(s).

Offering a range of interpretive options will help visitors make informed choices about how to spend their time.  
Photo credit: NHA Photo



## Challenges and Opportunities Affecting Interpretation

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and dedicated staff and supporters. It also faces a number of challenges. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome these challenges.

- Future audiences may have different expectations and needs for media and technology to better understand area stories and to make connections with area resources. The NHA does not have the infrastructure or capacity to handle some types of technology.
- Partnerships will be the backbone for implementing this interpretive plan. Existing partnerships will need to be strengthened and maintained. New partnerships will need to be identified and established. NHA Board members, staff, and partners will need to collaborate and work together to provide interpretive programs and services.
- Due to budget shortfalls and curriculum mandates, schools may not be able to come to the NHA so outreach alternatives will need to be identified. For example, the NHA may provide the resources so the teachers can develop lessons and present them to the students.
- Visitor motivations for spending their leisure time are changing. As more demands are being placed on free time there is a limited amount of time available to participate in interpretive and educational activities and programs. Offering a range of options as well as consolidating events may need to be considered.
- As fiscal budgets tighten, NHA Board members, staff, and partners will need to develop business strategies and consider new, different, perhaps entrepreneurial fee-based ways to provide interpretive and educational services.
- A favorable exchange rate brings Canadians across the border for shopping and dining. Conversely, tighter border restrictions mean that Americans without passports will be required to stay on the American side of Niagara Falls. Ironically, both Canadians and Americans will require specific marketing to encourage extended stays within the NHA.
- While some sites may work together, there is a consistent lack of collaboration, coordination, and connection between all of the sites within the NHA. There is no comprehensive wayfinding or public transportation system linking the sites along the corridor together.
- Competition for the tourism business is evident and can be confusing to visitors. Many Welcome Centers are located far from “the Falls”. These Welcome Centers include those located at the Pennsylvania state line, the New York State Thruway reststops, and at gateways to the city/region. Some private tour operators offer a four-hour tour of the American side of Niagara Falls. There are also “Niagara Falls Visitor Welcome Centers” that are staffed by private tour operators.

## Existing Conditions

*The following is a brief and generalized description of visitor experiences and interpretive services that existed in FY2013. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can help to justify some of the plan's proposed actions.*

### Trip Planning, Arrival and Orientation Experience

#### Website

There is a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area website under development. The NPS-maintained website ([www.nps.gov/nifa](http://www.nps.gov/nifa)) has a minimal amount of information primarily focused on recently completed planning projects. Having two websites can be

confusing for visitors if they do a search and find both websites are listed. The NPS and the NHA websites will eventually be linked.

#### Attraction Passes

Two different for-fee passes are available for visitors to gain access to many of the most popular attractions. It can be very difficult for visitors to understand the benefits and value of the Discovery Pass compared to the Niagara Power Pass. Both passes offer access to some of the same attractions within the NHA. Neither pass emphasizes or highlights a connection to the NHA or its themes.

#### Visitor Centers

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area does not have its own visitor center. Instead there are many different locations where visitors can get information about the NHA. Because each of these locations has its own mission to fulfill, NHA-specific orientation and information may be limited.

There are six visitor centers located within the NHA: Niagara Falls State Park Visitor Center located adjacent to the Falls, Niagara USA Visitor Center located within the City of Niagara Falls and a short walk to the Falls, Niagara Gorge Discovery Center located adjacent to the Schoelkopf Power Station site in the Gorge, Old Fort Niagara Visitor Center located adjacent to the Old Fort, Power Vista located adjacent to Robert Moses Power Plant, and the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce. All, except the Discovery Center, are open year-round. They each feature a staffed information desk, brochures, exhibits, and a gift shop/bookstore.

Within the NHA wayfinding can be challenging because there are many different sign systems used.

Photo credit: NPS Photo





## Wayfinding

Navigating between attractions and resources can be challenging especially when attempting to travel the length of the NHA. While there are multiple sign systems within the NHA including city, county, Seaway Trail, and State Parks, there is no consistent or coordinated NHA wayfinding system.

## Trip Itineraries

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is primarily a driving destination. A variety of organizations and publications suggest itineraries to sites and resources located within the NHA. While some even have thematic connections, none reference the NHA as a reason to visit:

- Buffalo Niagara Planning Guide suggests 5 itineraries: Makin' Memories, Toss the Textbooks, Nature's Splendor, Historical Treasures, Experience Education Excursions
- Niagara Wine Trail suggests 1 itinerary: Agricultural Tour
- Niagara USA suggests 5 itineraries: Family Fun, Underground Railroad, War of 1812, Buffalo Niagara Heritage Trail North, Niagara River Magic
- New York State Tourism suggests 1 itinerary: Wonders of Nature and Design
- New York State Path Through History suggests more than a dozen different itineraries

## **NHA Identity and Marketing**

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area does not have a well-known identity or marketing strategy. Because the NHA is based on

partnerships, the partners struggle to maintain their own identity much less reflect a single "National Heritage Area" identity. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is not acknowledged in the majority of tourist publications produced by local groups, communities, or agencies located within the NHA.

## **Interpretive Media**

There is interpretive media available within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Most of the interpretive media is site-specific and partner-focused. The content within these resources helps visitors make connections to the NHA interpretive themes.

## Publications

The majority of the available publications cover Borderland/Border Crossing themes including the Siege 1759, Campaign Against Niagara, A History and Guide to Old Fort Niagara, Niagara 1812 Legacy Council Fold-out Map, Finding the War of 1812 in Niagara County, and A Legacy of Mutual Trust. The Power Trail brochure connects to the Power and Industry theme.

The NHA does not have a well-known identity.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



## Outdoor Exhibits

Wayside or landscape-based exhibits within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area serve three different roles: as confirmation that visitors are in a site of significance, as markers that provide information about the natural and historical events that took place at a particular location, and as visitor orientation that explains where visitors can go and how to get there. All three functions are very important to visitors. However, because the waysides are produced by many different agencies and organizations, there is no consistency either in quality or quantity of content between the panels.

Wayside or landscape-based exhibits are located within Old Fort Niagara and each of the New York State Park sites. Orientation kiosks are being placed throughout the City of Niagara Falls linking the specific location to historic events in the area. Interpretive signs created by the Historical Association of Lewiston, Seaway Trail, and individual 1812 Peace Gardens are also located within the NHA.

## Exhibits

Each visitor center has indoor exhibits:

- Niagara Falls State Park Visitor Center – exhibits on a variety of topics including the gorge trail system and the natural and local history of the Niagara Gorge area.
- Niagara USA Visitor Center – exhibits about the region, although none specific to the NHA.
- Niagara Gorge Discovery Center – exhibits about geology and

relates the natural, cultural, and local history of the falls and gorge

- Old Fort Niagara Visitor Center – exhibits related to Old Fort Niagara themes
- Power Vista – exhibits related to hydroelectric power and Tuscarora Indian Nation.

## Social Media

The Executive Director maintains a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Facebook page that offers historical, geographic, and thematic insights into the region. Publicity for upcoming events is also posted. A Twitter account (@NiagaraHeritage) is also in place and currently used on a limited basis.

## Youth Programs

A series of War of 1812 trading cards featuring Betsy Doyle, the Cusick Family, Luther Wilson and Peter Buell Porter were developed to commemorate the Bicentennial. The NHA is currently developing an area-specific Junior Ranger program. Children will receive a badge upon completion of a booklet-based program.

## Curriculum-based Education Programs

In 2012 and 2013, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area received the National Park Foundation's "America's Best Idea" grant to support on-site programming for 500 fourth-grade and 500 seventh-grade students at Old Fort Niagara. During 2012, the NHA also partnered with WNED, a local PBS affiliate, to provide "The War of 1812" DVD and an educator guide for each fourth-grade class. During 2013, the NHA partnered with two

seventh-grade educators within the Niagara Falls City School District to create a curriculum based on the novel *the Gold Laced Coat* which describes life at Fort Niagara under French rule.

### Interpretive Programs

A variety of programs and services are offered at all of the New York State Parks and Old Fort Niagara year-round. Costumed interpretation is offered at Niagara Falls Reservation and at Old Fort Niagara and is a feature of the Marble Orchard Ghost Walk (Lewiston Council of the Arts). Independent guides and historians provide step-on bus guide services upon request. While service providers are supervised by the individual sites, there are no agreed-upon NHA-wide standards or procedures to ensure quality, accuracy, and authenticity of these guide services. Special events are offered year-round throughout the NHA at specific sites and within the communities.

### Staffing Support Systems

Effective June 2013, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is administered by a Board of Directors, who is responsible for supporting the implementation of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan. An Executive Director oversees the daily operation of the NHA. This position reports to the Board and is funded by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. Niagara University provides office space and parking, interns, meeting space, phone and internet, mailing, salary administration and benefits for the Executive Director.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are necessary to reach and educate the public about the history and significance of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Though few of the partner-based interpretive and educational programs target the NHA specifically, many programs overlap with the primary interpretive themes.



In the Niagara USA Visitor Center an exhibit helps visitors remember their experience in Niagara Falls.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo





# *Part 2* Actions Recommendations

## Goals for Interpretation and Education

After reviewing the contents of this LRIP's Part One, the planning team identified the following interpretive and educational goals. Interpretive partnerships will play a key role in the implementation of the LRIP and also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services. To ensure that NHA interpretive and educational services are integrated and coordinated, this LRIP has been vetted with the Management Plan, the Niagara Greenway Plan, and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area Management Plan.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the overall interpretive and educational services of the NHA, the following goals and issues must be addressed over the next 5 to 7 years:

## Present the National Heritage Area as a Unified, Single Destination and Visitor Experience

The overarching vision for the next five to seven years is to create a unified visitor experience that presents the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area as a single destination. All of the goals and associated actions described below and outlined in the implementation strategy reveal practical and useful ways to achieve this vision. Communication between the NHA Board of Directors, staff, and partners will be critical to create a culture of collaboration rather than one of expectation that the NHA will be implementing the plan on its own.

## Unify the Trip Planning, Arrival, and Orientation Experience

### Website

Most on-site visitors will begin their experiences by seeking travel



The website will inspire visitors to come experience the NHA year-round.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



information by using a variety of websites. Many virtual visitors never physically come to the NHA and will have their needs met solely through the website. Therefore, the NHA website should satisfy the needs of virtual visitors as well as the trip planners by highlighting the available opportunities and experiences. There will be an initially heavy demand placed on the Executive Director's time to simply maintain and update the website. Consideration will need to be made on how to provide adequate support to continually maintain, update, and develop new content including trip planning information and interpretive media.

The NHA is developing an interactive website that is scheduled for activation in early 2014. The website will provide detailed information that will facilitate orientation and exploration of the NHA and thematic interpretive content. Offering and/or linking to a variety of thematically-relevant articles, publications, maps, images, and research on the website will provide visitors with a depth of opportunities to experience NHA resources. Setting up a strong framework that can grow and expand based on partner and visitor feedback as well as new research and scholarship will give virtual visitors many reasons to return to the website. Linking between the NHA and partner websites, including the National Park Service, will prevent duplication of effort, create opportunities for cross-promotion of events and activities, and help visitors efficiently and effectively find the information or content they are searching for. Because there are so many websites and webpages that promote Niagara

Falls as a destination, the NHA will need to continually run search engine optimization programs to ensure that they display at or near the top of the search listings.

One of the most important, and often used, sections of the NHA website will be trip planning resources and expertise. To be effective, this section must be accessible, prominently positioned within the website, and well-organized. Some trip planning resources that will help address frequently asked visitor questions may include a downloadable and printable trip planning map and self-service trip builder using temporal and thematic examples. Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) operates the Niagara USA Visitor Center (Niagara USA VC). This strong partnership means that visitors will have an abundance of resources that will help them discover the wealth of services, attractions, and experiences available.

Some visitors need re-assurance, while others need greater freedom to create their own adventure. Brochures, maps, publications, and other resources available through the NHA and NTCC/Niagara USA VC must provide the most current and accurate information – a significant task of constant coordination. Customizable trip planning will help visitors create and identify the experience that best meets their needs. Social media sites, such as Yelp and Trip Advisor, offer useful tools that allow visitors to reveal and rate their experiences so that others can be inspired in anticipation of their visit.

### Attraction Passes

Passes are a convenient and easy way for many visitors to access the many different attractions featured within the NHA. However, offering too many different types of passes can be confusing and difficult to identify the best choice to meet visitor needs and expectations. Conducting market research to explore the feasibility of an NHA pass and impacts on existing pass programs will help staff and partners determine whether this is a viable option to help visitors diversify their experience along the Niagara River corridor from LaSalle to Lake Ontario.

### Visitor Centers/Orientation Centers

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will create a network of facilities that serve as gateways to connect visitors to relevant themes and stories as well as orient them to appropriate interpretive and educational opportunities. Within the next five to seven years, the NHA will be collaborating with partners to develop the interpretive and educational content for the Niagara Experience Center in Niagara Falls. Until that facility is open, the NHA should establish a presence within the NTCC/Niagara USA VC; there will be a variety of opportunities to orient visitors to the NHA and its resources, services, attractions, and stories.

Collaboration with the hospitality centers already located in Lewiston and Youngstown may be the ideal strategy to establish NHA orientation centers along the lower river. The centers are easily accessible, centrally located within existing facilities and open year-round. They would

help orient visitors to the NHA and its resources, services, and attractions. Because the centers are already staffed, there would be an immediate point of contact as well as a visual identity for the NHA. To enhance the experience, interactive exhibits may be installed to interpret NHA-relevant themes.

### Wayfinding

Before visitors can have a meaningful experience, they need to find their way to a site, determine where their experience begins, and take care of their basic needs. Visitor experience issues such as NHA branding and orientation must be addressed before interpretation can begin. A seamless, coordinated system of wayfinding throughout the National Heritage Area including orientation, information, regulatory, safety, and promotional signs is the first step toward satisfying these basic visitor needs.

This system could help to define and increase the visibility of the NHA brand. Initially, research should be conducted to identify and assess all of the existing wayfinding systems currently being used. A coordinated, comprehensive system would create consistency among established wayfinding programs and build on the strengths of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and its partners. For example, the new map that shows NHA locations could become the cornerstone of a comprehensive wayfinding system including detailed directional signs, outdoor exhibits, and bulletin boards.

### Transportation and Trails

A number of walking, biking, and hiking trails are located throughout

the NHA. Most of the trails are not linked nor are they identified as being within the NHA. A priority will be to support and coordinate with the Niagara River Greenway Commission to implement an integrated trail system as well as encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail along and within the Niagara River Gorge. These trail systems will allow visitors to travel from the upper river area to the falls and on to the fort at the mouth of the river. Providing visitors with access to become immersed in the natural resources will aid in understanding why the NHA was established and provide opportunities for connections to all of the NHA interpretive themes.

### **Establish NHA Brand and Develop a Marketing Strategy**

A strong brand and effective marketing strategy will present participating attractions and tourism services within the NHA as a unified regional tourism product. It is important that the NHA brand be used consistently and correctly to reflect the thematic relationships among sites within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Establishing NHA marketing partnerships to develop and implement a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area campaign will promote a strong connection between the NHA and its partners. Positive personal experiences shared with others through a creative campaign will have an impact on repeat visitation and bring in new visitors. A shared challenge for the NHA and partners will be to effectively market to audiences who have not traditionally gone into the

city or, conversely, to destinations outside their local neighborhoods. Located within an international center and an international destination, the NHA has a phenomenal opportunity to tell a unique American story that can be intriguing and compelling to international visitors who often look for free or economical places to have such an experience. The marketing strategy should have a clear vision, identify measurable results, emphasize the NHA brand, integrate opportunities for feedback, and describe specific procedures and policies.

### **Integrate Existing and Establish NHA-Inclusive Interpretive Media**

When using existing and creating new forms of interpretive media, NHA staff and partners must consider the different ways that the media can be used. With every potential media project the most versatile and sustainable delivery methods should be considered and evaluated together with start-up and long-term labor and other costs. Reflecting on whether the interpretive media can be posted on a website, made available to tour companies, and/or delivered through personal electronic devices will help staff and partners make informed choices about the appropriate delivery methods for a particular story/theme to reach the most visitors. In addition, staff and partners will need to determine how the media will be maintained and who will be responsible for maintaining it.

### **Publications**

Visitors typically use printed publications in two ways: for information and orientation



during their visit and for in-depth interpretation following their visit. While interpretive publications offer opportunities to support the presentation of the NHA interpretive themes and stories to visitors, they may not be the best method. Printed publications have significant limitations, however, such as sustainability, limited audience reach, logistics and storage issues, and other factors that are not shared by the greener choice offered by electronic publishing. While some visitors will always appreciate a printed publication, increasing numbers of visitors prefer electronic ones. Publications planning should keep in mind shifting trends, production and oversight costs for print publishing.

A Niagara Falls National Heritage Area brochure that includes a detailed map highlighting NHA resources could be used for on-site and virtual trip planning as

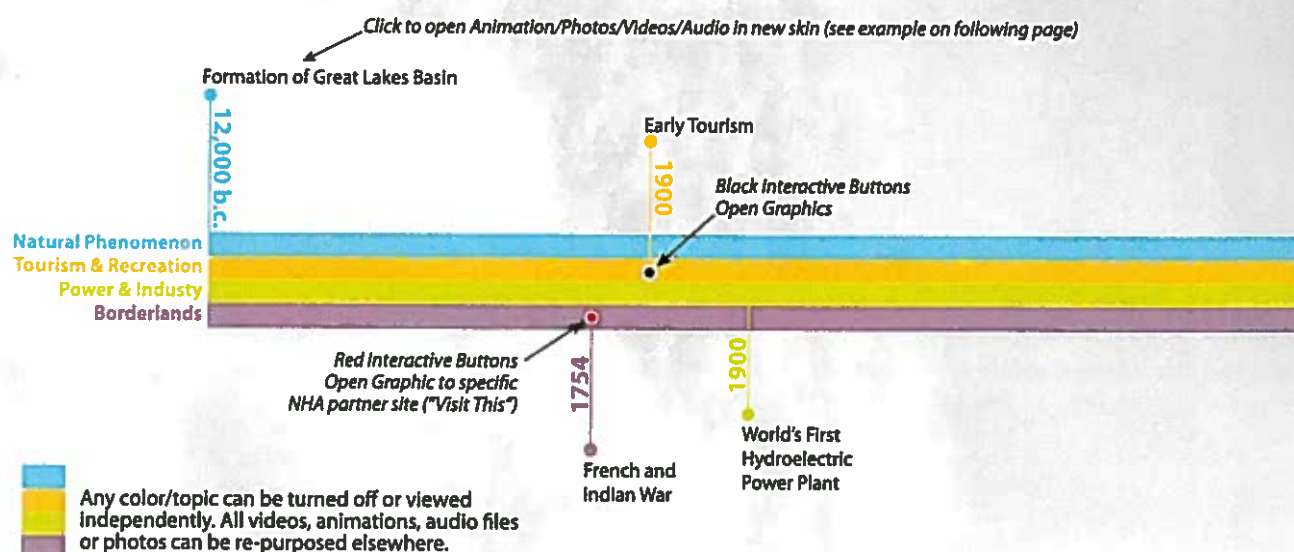
well as publications, posters, and interpretive presentations. Many visitors may find the brochure not only provides information and orientation to support their on-site visit, it also becomes a souvenir of their experience.

### Digital Media

Digital media is well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. It can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. This media can reach many visitors who are now using a range of technological systems for entertainment, information, orientation, and interpretation. In response to the growing demand for these services, the NHA needs to remain flexible and open to offering portable customizable media opportunities to support the presentation of the interpretive themes and stories. Using digital media will create opportunities

A digital interactive timeline could be used to support a variety of interpretive purposes. Photo credit: NPS Graphic

## Follow the River . . . Niagara Falls Interactive Timeline



for more diverse audiences to experience NHA resources than ever before because they will have access to the resources and meanings at their convenience.

Once digital productions are created and made available, staff must maintain, monitor, and update the programs and include significant operational costs to sustain and maintain them. Local media outlets and hospitality venues may be enlisted to air digital programs to expand the reach of the interpretive programs. Most digital programs can be posted on the NHA website for visitors to access at their leisure.

For example, a short 2- or 3-minute video that reflects the range of stories and experiences going along the Niagara River corridor from LaSalle to Lake Ontario could be produced using existing or new footage and evocative music. Minimizing or using no narration would create opportunities to connect to a multilingual audience and broaden the use of video.

Outdoor exhibits like those used by the Seaway Trail offer a durable, sustainable method to tell NHA stories.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



Another example would be the development of an interactive timeline orienting the visitor to the variety of stories and experiences associated with the NHA. This storytelling technique could help to organize and connect the events that took place within the region and also serve as a trip-planning guide and educational opportunity. The timeline could then be used in many different venues including websites, visitor centers, and exhibits.

### Outdoor Exhibits

Outdoor exhibits are a durable, sustainable, and long-term method to tell NHA stories on location. They “caption the landscape” and help visitors connect to the location, extent, and character of landscape features that may no longer exist or may be difficult to visualize/understand as well as introduce NHA themes and orient visitors. These exhibits provide 24-7 information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources. In association with good graphics, outdoor exhibits can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary exhibits can be developed inexpensively to interpret construction and restoration/preservation projects. In the future, “digital signage” may be used as a type of outdoor exhibit to provide orientation and information that can be easily updated providing opportunities to offer new insights without having to create a new outdoor exhibit.

A NHA-wide outdoor exhibit strategy, including design guidelines, is recommended to ensure the

development of a complete, high-quality, and unified system of exhibits with a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area identity. The strategy will provide an in-depth assessment of all potential outdoor exhibit sites. It includes both informational and interpretive exhibits; and, builds on what already exists rather than duplicating the effort. The document also can set priorities to guide outdoor exhibit development in phases at key locations as funding allows. The strategy will describe the purpose of each outdoor exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget estimate would also be part of the document.

A public art plan, prepared in cooperation with partners such as Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, Castellani Art Museum, and the Lewiston Council for the Arts, could create opportunities for artistic interpretation of the NHA interpretive themes. The NHA-inspired art may attract local artists and a multi-lingual audience.

### Social Media

Social media has the potential to become one of the most used components of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area interpretive program. There are limitless opportunities to use applications that create dynamic interactions with community members and visitors so that they can share ideas about what to do, where to go, and what they have experienced. The staff and partners should work together to cross-promote social media content.

A strategy for social media use should be created by a team that includes partner representatives. The strategy will describe appropriate NHA social media practices so that the team members can effectively collaborate on content and manage user-generated feedback. A long-term goal may be for the team to integrate visitor-based trip sharing as a primary component of the social media strategy.

### **Define Volunteer Needs and Create Program Support Systems**

The full-time NHA Executive Director provides administrative support, nurtures partner relationships, works with partners to provide and promote interpretive and educational opportunities, oversees development and maintenance of interpretive and social media including the website, and coordinates volunteer internships. There are many more duties and responsibilities outlined in this plan than this position will be able to manage.

A cohesive, consistent volunteer support group is required for the NHA and should be built on the success of existing programs such as the NTCC/Niagara USA VC volunteer program. Volunteers will be needed to fully implement the vision outlined in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan. Before taking action to recruit volunteers, the NHA must determine how this program will be different and/or gain support from other local volunteer organizations, community service agencies, and university-based programs. Establishing a skills or "talent" database that aligns with needed support and/or positions



will help partners identify who might best be able to help work on a specific project or event, because recruiting, hiring, and training a strong, diverse cadre of volunteers will benefit the entire NHA. Many people may be interested in volunteering or accepting an internship; however, they may not know what opportunities are available. An online or newsletter “bulletin board” advertising volunteer opportunities could be useful to recruit volunteers.

Once firmly established, the volunteer program may be expanded with more dedicated supervision and funding. A coordinator will be required to develop a strong foundation for the volunteer program and facilitate the retention of current volunteers as well as the development and growth of this program. The program would need to be evaluated for effectiveness as it grows.

For future interpretive programs and services, certified guide and living history interpreter programs may be established with guidance from outside professional credentialing organizations such as the National Association for Interpretation.

## **Establish Quality Standards and Provide Training**

### **Quality Standards**

Quality is the hallmark of any successful, effective, and meaningful program or service. Quality standards describe the criteria for successful, effective, and meaningful NHA interpretive programs and services. Research should be conducted to determine what existing standards are used by other professional interpretive organizations. Once the standards

are identified, then the application process should be implemented, and visitor readiness assessments offered.

### **Training**

A trained and motivated workforce is essential for any successful interpretive and educational operation. The NHA should make regularly scheduled, recurring training for staff, volunteers and partners a priority. A range of training opportunities should be provided to include customer service, hospitality, and cultural sensitivity. An emphasis should be placed on personal accountability, supervisory skills, and coaching in interpretive standards for staff, partners, or volunteers who present interpretive programs, design publications, media, and exhibits, or coordinate educational programs. While some training may need to be NHA-led, strong consideration should be given to using contractor-, NPS-, and National Association for Interpretation-led sessions rather than independently developing new training programs. It may also be helpful to participate in training in audience-centered interpretive methods such as “Facilitated Dialogue”. This type of training will help interpreters increase their skills and abilities to create relevance and to address some of the potentially sensitive NHA themes and stories.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is a critical step in the development of interpretive media and programs. Identifying appropriate measurement indicators and creating evaluation instruments in collaboration with partners will be necessary to collect relevant data.

Front-end evaluations inform staff about what visitors already know

about the area before they come, what understandings they may have about the significance of the area, or how to fulfill the visitor's interest in visiting the area. This type of evaluative study is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results.

Formative evaluations allow staff to get feedback on media content before it is fabricated. Knowing how potential visitors react to stories and information or even how the message is displayed can inform and enhance the media product and the overall visitor experience.

Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs and whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected. Summative evaluation may even be a necessary follow-up for certain sources of funding such as foundation grants.

## Welcome a Variety of Audiences

Most interpretive programs and services are developed for a general audience. There will be visitors to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area who come with specific needs and for specific reasons. To best meet these needs and provide opportunities to discover the significance of the NHA, workshop participants identified some visitor groups that may be interested in specific topics of interest or require specific interpretive services including heritage tourists, motorcoach group tours, local visitors, and multi-generational families.

The NHA should work actively to develop enduring relationships with a diversity of local citizens and visitors and be welcoming and relevant to all. Interpretive programs and services must authentically tell the stories of the NHA and connect to the resources to be relevant. In cooperation with partners, create packages and itineraries that identify areas of interest within the NHA to appeal to and meet each audience's needs.



The NHA should be welcoming and relevant to all and meet the needs of locals as well as first-time visitors.

Photo credit: NHA Photo



Using an "America's Best Idea" grant, the NHA and Old Fort Niagara worked with two local teachers to create a seventh-grade educational program. Photo credit: NHA Photo

Heritage tourists are continually seeking opportunities to discover more about the history of an area. Working with partners such as NTCC/Niagara USA VC and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau to specifically target marketing for this specific audience and collaborating with the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor and the New York State Path Through History project to develop heritage tourism opportunities will generate increased interest in NHA historical themes.

Motorcoach group tours often have limited exposure to NHA-relevant resources and themes due to very strict and short time schedules. Developing partnerships with tour operators may help to lengthen these group tour experiences and broaden visitors understanding of the geographic, natural, and cultural history of the area.

Local visitors are often overlooked because they live in the resource and may already possess a higher depth of resource knowledge. Because of the diverse communities located within the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara and Erie Counties, and across the river in Niagara Falls, Canada, research may be required

to fully determine the needs and interests of these different local audiences so that NHA-supported partners create meaningful, high quality, local history presentations and events designed specifically for residents. Sometimes a more direct marketing campaign of events and activities is all that is required to generate goodwill and stewardship with local visitors. For others, an opportunity to discover the distinctive nature of NHA-based experiences compared to those offered in Canada may be needed to entice them to visit.

Multi-generational families may require facilities that can accommodate large groups, offer group attraction discounts, and provide a variety of interactive, engaging activities.

### **Develop Sustainable Education Programs and Professional Development Experiences**

An effective, sustainable education program requires professional educators to plan, develop, implement, and assess education and professional development opportunities. Future educational programming will be developed in collaboration with educators who create, field test, and share their work through professional development experiences.

The resources and themes of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education programming in partnership with NHA partners and local elementary, secondary, and university educators. While research confirms that place-based and resource immersive experiences may create the



strongest connections, web-based and distance learning opportunities should be considered to connect to regional and global audiences.

Currently, most partners develop educational programs independently. State Park staff are updating their education programs to address current state curriculum standards and to provide a view of the natural and cultural history of the local environment. The NHA should develop a stronger working relationship with partners and educators to plan comprehensive educational programming and professional development experiences that complement each other, connect to the interpretive themes, and help all students, regardless of age, have access to innovative formal and informal learning experiences that instill a sense of appreciation and pride for the historic and natural areas in which they live.

The development and growth of educational programming should be based on Common Core Standards, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). When linked directly to these standards, more teachers, students, and parents will recognize the value of using the NHA resources. In the summer 2013, the National Park Foundation's "America's Best Idea" grant was used to compensate two teachers so they could develop an educational experience using *The Gold-Laced Coat*. The educators worked closely with Old Fort Niagara and the NHA Executive Director. Because the educators were familiar with the Common Core Learning Standards and their students' needs, they created a unit that was useful and effective. They

felt ownership of the program and appreciated the flexibility to create a tool that works for them and their students rather than having an outside agency dictate how to teach the unit.

A needs assessment should be conducted to provide overall direction for the NHA education program. An education advisory committee, using local area school and university educators and administrators, should advise the Board on the most current and

Through the inventions of Nikola Tesla, the large-scale generation of electricity was first undertaken at Niagara Falls.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo



useful ways to serve educators and students and create educational programming.

Volunteers and teachers could be the key to program sustainability and longevity. Following the model established in 2013, the NHA will use teachers during the summer to help develop educational and professional development opportunities. After pilot testing the units with his/her class, the teacher then conducts workshops so that other teachers can present the units to their classes. This cadre of teachers then may be available to serve on the education advisory committee to offer insights and serve as a focus group for suggestions on future programming.

## **Effectively Reach and Engage Youth**

It is in the long-term best interest of the NHA to identify and meet the needs of young people from ages 4 to 25 and provide them and their families with opportunities to discover the significance of our nation's resources. Establishing a youth internship program and partnering with regionally-based youth organizations and trade organizations will increase opportunities for local young people to experience the natural and cultural history of the area and to also become leaders in the community.

An effective youth program requires investment in staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. Much of the current youth programming within the NHA is associated with junior



Collaborating with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad State Heritage Area, will allow the NHA to more effectively tell thematically relevant stories and leverage resources.  
Photo credit: NPS Photo





ranger activities, special events, and special projects. Future consideration should be given to offering a diverse range of age-appropriate, engaging, interactive individual and family experiences.

### **Coordinate and Support NHA-Thematically Relevant Interpretive Programs and Events**

The diversity of NHA resources and themes presents almost limitless opportunities for innovative interpretive programs and events. Offering grants supports the development of programs and events that interpret all NHA themes. This will create opportunities for world class visitor experiences. These interpretive programs and events should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify or improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful. The next step will be to develop a grant program for thematically related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.

### **Located within the NHA is the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area**

Collaborating with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage

Area, (a New York State heritage area) to tell the regional and related stories will effectively leverage the fiscal and staff resources of both agencies. For the same reasons, the NHA should collaborate with agencies that are telling the stories related to Frederick Law Olmsted's vision and works.

The NHA should always be proactive in determining best practices to make messages meaningful. Working with partners to develop messages that highlight the importance of the resources will help instill a stewardship ethic in visitors. Once these key NHA messages and stories are identified, then a variety of formats should be used to deliver them to all staff and partners who have contact with visitors.

Over Niagara Falls and through the Niagara River courses the outflow from four of the Great Lakes, which is twenty percent of the world's fresh water. Photo credit: NPS Photo



## Implementation Plan

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. The staff and key partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is extremely important to allow staff and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

During the 2013 Implementation Strategy meeting, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into on-going and annual (years 1-5+) goals. While some action items can be implemented immediately within existing funding and staffing levels, others will require additional funding and staffing before action can be taken.

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is fortunate to have many partners - current and future - to assist with the implementation plan. Below is the list of current partners; and, the abbreviations used on the corresponding implementation plan.

### Identifiers for Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Partners

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Artpark  | NTCC-Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation  |
| ANHA-Alliance for National Heritage Areas                      | NTHP – National Trust for Historic Preservation  |
| BNCVB-Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitor's Bureau          | NU-Niagara University  |
| CVNHP-Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership           | NYPA Power Vista-New York Power Authority's Power Vista  |
| ECNHC-Erie Canalway National Heritage Area                     | NYPA-New York Power Authority  |
| ESD-Empire State Development                                   | NYS DOT-New York State Department of Transportation  |
| GTI- Global Tourism Institute                                  | NYS OPRHP-New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation   |
| HRVNHA-Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area              | NYS Parks-New York State Parks   |
| NACC-Niagara Arts and Cultural Center                          | OFN-Old Fort Niagara   |
| NCCC-Niagara County Community College                          | Partner Communities-Village of Youngstown, Town of Porter, Village of Lewiston Town of Lewiston, City of Niagara Falls |
| NAI-National Association of Interpretation                     | RTCA-Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service  |
| Niagara USA VC- Niagara USA Visitor Center                     | SHA- State Heritage Areas  |
| Niagara USA Wine Trail   | WNY-Western New York   |
| NF UGRR- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area      |  |
| NHL- National Historic Landmark, National Park Service Program |  |
| NPS-National Park Service                                      |  |

| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions   | Potential Fund<br>Sources | Support Needed  | On-<br>Going | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|---|---------------------------|---|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Unify the Trip Planning, Arrival, and Orientation Experience</b>   |                           |   |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Website:</b>   |                           |   |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Upgrade and maintain the NHA website to reflect the brand and messages.   |                           |   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Create a trip planning section of the website that includes suggested itineraries, maps, tours, and guides.   |                           | Partners, NHL   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Investigate the use of virtual programs to create and promote NHA-themed itineraries that allow visitors to book and rate the itineraries.                                  |                           |   |              | X      |        |        |        |         |
| Encourage partners to post mutual links and assist in development of interpretive content.  |                           | Partners  | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Coordinate content and use of the NHA website with that of the National Park Service website.   |                           | NPS   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Post new and provide access to NHA-related articles, research papers, historic maps, and photographs.   |                           | Partners  | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Coordinate a NHA-wide calendar of events that encourages exploration and visitation throughout the corridor and to thematically-related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties. |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, Partner Communities and Sites   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Promote partners' websites, including NY State Parks, and feature partners' upcoming events and programs.   |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, NYS Parks, Partners   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Attraction Passes:</b>   |                           |   |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Conduct market research to explore the feasibility of a NHA pass(es).   |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, WNY economic development agencies, Partners   |              |        |        | X      |        |         |
| <b>Visitor Centers/Orientation Centers:</b>   |                           |   |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with partners to develop the interpretive and educational content for the Niagara Experience Center.  |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, City of Niagara Falls, NU  |              |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Establish a presence at the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) Visitor Center.   |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC   |              | X      |        |        |        |         |
| Working with community partners, establish orientation centers in existing facilities in Lewiston and Youngstown.   |                           | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, WNY economic development agencies, Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, Partners |              | X      |        |        |        |         |
| Develop and install NHA-specific kiosks at orientation centers and key locations.   |                           |   |              |        | X      |        |        |         |
| <b>Wayfinding:</b>  |                           |   |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Advocate for consistency among established wayfinding programs in City of Niagara Falls, NY State Parks, and Lewiston.  |                           | Partners, Western NY economic development agencies, Niagara County, NYDOT   | X            |        |        |        |        |         |
| Conduct research and outreach to identify all existing wayfinding systems.  |                           | NU, NTCC/Niagara USA VC   |              | X      |        |        |        |         |

| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions   | Potential Fund<br>Sources                                 | Support Needed  | On-<br>Going | Year 1   | Year 2         | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|---|---|---|--------------|----------|----------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Develop a NHA-wide wayfinding plan.   |   |   |              |          |                | X      |        |         |
| <b>Transportation and Trails:</b>   |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| Encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system along the Niagara River gorge.   |   | Niagara River Greenway, NYS Parks, NYPA, City of Niagara Falls, Town of Lewiston, Village of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Youngstown, Old Fort Niagara, Partner Sites, RTCA | X            |          |                |        |        |         |
| Coordinate with and support the interpretive vision and implementation strategy of thematically-related trail systems within the NHA.           | Great Lakes Seaway Trail and Niagara River Greenway funds | NYS Parks, Niagara River Greenway, Seaway Trail, NF UGRR, Niagara USA Wine Trail  |              |          |                |        | X      |         |
| <b>Establish NHA Brand and Develop a Marketing Strategy</b>   |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| <b>Branding:</b>  |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| Implement a messaging strategy for the NHA.   |   |   |              | X        |                |        |        |         |
| Ensure correct and accurate usage of the NHA brand at different scales, in different formats, and for different uses by local partners.         |   | Partners  |              |          | X              |        |        |         |
| <b>Marketing:</b>   |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| Enhance the visibility of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area within NTCC online and print marketing materials.                            |   | NTCC/Niagara USA VC   |              | X        |                |        |        |         |
| Cultivate regional marketing partnerships within the Western NY region and Southern Ontario.  |   | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB  |              |          | X              |        |        |         |
| Encourage creative marketing partnerships to bring together diverse partners within the NHA and thematically-related sites.                     |   | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, Partners  | X            |          |                |        |        |         |
| Create and distribute videos for hotel and motorcoach use.  |   |   |              |          |                | X      |        |         |
| <b>Integrate Existing and Establish NHA-Inclusive Interpretive Media</b>  |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| <b>Publications:</b>  |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| Develop and distribute a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area brochure including a detailed map.  |   | NYS Parks, Niagara and Erie Counties, Partners, Lower River Chambers of Commerce, NTCC/ Niagara USA VC  |              | Map Only | Map & Brochure | X      |        |         |
| <b>Digital Media:</b>   |   |   |              |          |                |        |        |         |
| Create digital programs and tours that can be downloaded or streamed.   |   | Partners, NYS Parks, NYPA Power Vista   |              | X        |                |        |        |         |
| Develop a creative, fun, and user-friendly smartphone application to provide a wide range of information and interpretive content for visitors. |   | Partners, GTI/NU  |              |          | X              |        |        |         |
| Develop and distribute an electronic newsletter about the National Heritage Area.   |   |   |              |          |                |        |        | X       |



| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions  | Potential Fund Sources | Support Needed   | On-Going | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|--|------------------------|--|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Outdoor Exhibits:</b>   |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Develop design guidelines and placement strategies for outdoor exhibits, kiosks, and sign types.   |                        | CVNHP, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, ECNHC                                  |          | X      |        |        |        |         |
| In cooperation with NACC, prepare a public art plan outlining opportunities for targeting projects and attracting artists.   |                        | NACC, Town of Lewiston, Village of Lewiston, Interpretive Partners |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Develop strategy for outdoor interpretive exhibits. Create outdoor orientation exhibits at key locations (in addition to NY State Park-produced exhibits on Buttery Elevators, Schoelkopf Power Station, Great Gorge Trolley Line) along the river corridor. |                        | Partners, NYS State Parks  |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Investigate the use of "digital signage" as an orientation and interpretive tool.  |                        |  |          | X      |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Social Media:</b>   |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Continue and expand use of the Facebook page, Instagram, and Twitter account.  |                        |  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Cross promote appropriate social media content with NY State Parks' Facebook pages and Pinterest sites.  |                        |  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Add sharing your trip component to social media outreach.  |                        |  |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| <b>Define Volunteer Needs and Create Program Support Systems</b>   |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Building on existing models/networks, establish a Certified Guides Program to serve as guides to the NHA and provide thematic interpretive services using a variety of techniques.   |                        | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, Interpretive Partners, NAI                    |          |        |        |        | X      |         |
| Building on existing models/networks, establish a Certified Living History Interpreters Program representing NHA themes and stories to support NHA sites and locations.  |                        | Living History Partners, NAI                                       |          |        |        |        |        | X       |
| <b>Volunteer Program:</b>  |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Review existing programs and conduct a needs assessment to determine what positions are needed.  |                        | NYS Parks  |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Define the roles and responsibilities to create volunteer position descriptions.   |                        |  |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Identify potential learning experiences and create internships or provide community service positions for Niagara University Hospitality program.  |                        | NU   |          | X      |        |        |        |         |
| Establish a "Junior Volunteer" program as an auxiliary to the adult program.   |                        | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, NACC                 |          |        |        |        |        | X       |
| <b>Establish Quality Standards and Provide Training</b>  |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Quality Standards:</b>  |                        |  |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Research existing models and identify quality standards for a Certified NHA Attractions, Events, and Visitor Services Program.   |                        | ECNHC, GTI/NU, NTHP, ANHA  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |

| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions  | Potential Fund Sources | Support Needed  | On-Going | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|--|------------------------|---|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Accept applications, award, and monitor the status of attractions, events, and visitor services that receive the NHA certification.  |                        |   |          | X      |        |        |        |         |
| Offer visitor readiness assessments.   |                        | NPS, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, NU, Partners  |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| <b>Training:</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Establish an orientation and introduction to the NHA training program.   |                        | NU, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, NPS, Partners  |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Research potential contractor-led training courses in customer service, hospitality, and cultural sensitivity (e.g. Delaware North Parks and Resorts "Guest Path")             |                        | NYS Parks, Delaware North   |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Identify and offer appropriate NPS- and NAI-led interpretation and education training sessions and encourage partners to attend.   |                        | NPS, NAI  |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| <b>Evaluation:</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with partners to identify measurement indicators, create instruments, and collect data relevant to interpretation and education within the National Heritage Area. |                        | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, NPS, NYS Parks, WNY economic development agencies, Partners, BNCVB, GTI/NU |          |        |        |        | X      |         |
| <b>Welcome a Variety of Audiences</b>  |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Heritage Tourists:</b>  |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Encourage joint tourism marketing between the NTCC/Niagara USA VC and the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau specifically targeting heritage tourists.               |                        | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, ECNHC   | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with National Heritage Areas, NYS Path Through History Project, and NYS National Heritage Areas, to develop heritage tourism opportunities.                        |                        | Partners  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Motorcoach Group Tours:</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Develop partnerships with tour operators to promote longer group tour experiences within the NHA.  |                        | NTCC/Niagara USA VC, BNCVB, ESD, NYPA   |          |        |        |        | X      |         |
| <b>Local Visitors:</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with partners in creating high quality local history presentations and events designed specifically for residents.   |                        | NYS Parks, GTI/NU, Partners   |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Work with NHA attractions on effective, collaborative research into the needs and interests of local audiences.  |                        | NYS Parks, Partners   |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Identify the distinctive nature of NHA-based opportunities in contrast to Canadian-based opportunities.  |                        |   |          |        |        |        | X      |         |
| <b>Multi-generational Families:</b>  |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Offer a variety of interactive, engaging activities for families with children.  |                        |   |          |        |        | X      |        |         |

| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions   | Potential Fund<br>Sources | Support Needed   | On-<br>Going | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|---|---------------------------|--|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <b>Develop Sustainable Education Programs and Professional Development Experiences</b>  |                           |  |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Identify and support interpretive and educational programs within the NHA that provide immersive experiences in the natural world (e.g. NYS Parks programs).  |                           | NYS Parks, Artpark, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations  |              |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Identify specific needs for teacher training (e.g. workshops, webinars, and continuing education classes) so that teachers will be able to effectively incorporate and utilize NHA sites and encourage sites to work collaboratively with teachers to meet those needs.         |                           | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, higher education institutions, NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, local govts, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, NHA sites, NU |              |        |        |        | X      |         |
| Recruit and train a volunteer corps of educators to provide in-classroom presentations and supplement on-site interpretive staff.   |                           | NHA sites, educators, NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations   |              |        |        |        |        | X       |
| Explore web-based and distance learning opportunities to connect to local and global audiences.   |                           | NU   |              |        |        |        |        | X       |
| <b>Pre-K to 12th Grade:</b>   |                           |  |              |        |        |        |        |         |
| Establish an advisory committee or working group to advise the NHA and its partners on education programming and professional development experiences and to offer strategies, priorities, and the shaping of programs in general for engaging the region's student population. |                           | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, NU, NCCC, higher education institutions  |              |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Establish a "heritage civics" program in cooperation with local school systems encompassing learning about local government, the state parks, tourism, outdoor recreation, and the NHA.   |                           | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, higher education institutions, NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, local govts, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, NHA sites     |              |        |        |        |        | X       |
| Establish a scholastic honors program that encourages high school students to undertake special projects in research, interpretation, conservation, the arts, local government, and other subjects.   |                           | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, Partners   |              |        |        |        |        | X       |
| Offer place-based educational experiences that are connected to the NYS Common Core curriculum at NHA sites such as Old Fort Niagara and Power Vista.   |                           | Public, Private and Charter School Districts, higher education institutions, NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, local govts, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, NHA sites     | X            |        |        |        |        |         |



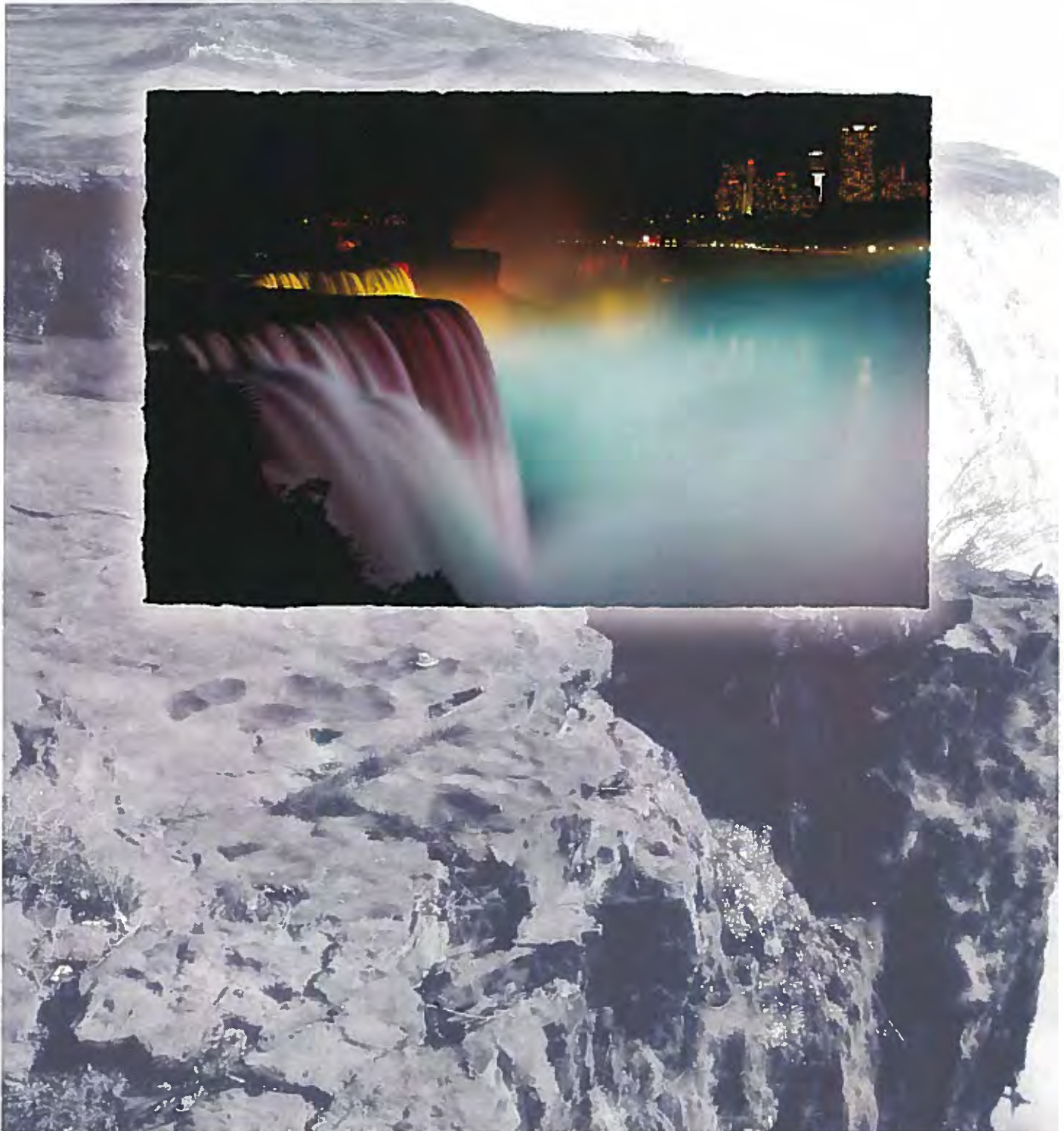
| Niagara Falls National Heritage Area<br>— Recommended Goals and Actions  | Potential Fund Sources | Support Needed  | On-Going | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5+ |
|--|------------------------|---|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Connect with existing formal and informal educational programs including summer camps.   |                        | Library System, Artpark, local govt programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, NACC, NU  |          | X      |        |        |        |         |
| <b>Adults:</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Establish a working group to focus on adult education programming charged with creating and implementing a short-range plan that includes, but is not limited to, a focus on arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events. |                        | NYS Parks, Niagara River Greenway, NU, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, community event organizers, NCCC                       |          |        |        |        | X      |         |
| Develop interactive workshops for adult learners.  |                        | NYS Parks, NU, NCCC   |          |        |        |        |        | X       |
| <b>Effectively Reach and Engage Youth</b>  |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Implement the NHA Junior Ranger Program and cultivate it as an anchor for continued collaboration and research and for expanded youth programming.   | NPS                    | Partners, NYS Parks, OFN, NYPA  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Develop additional ways for individual engagement with the sites and programs of the NHA, at appropriate age intervals (reaching ages from 4 to 25).   |                        | NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC/Niagara USA VC, local govts, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, NHA sites   |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Seek collaboration with a variety of agencies to create programs to serve parks and trails for resident youth.   |                        | NYS Parks, local parks, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC, local govts, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, NHA sites, SCA, AmeriCorps |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| Partner with local trades organizations or artists' guilds in creating training or apprentice programs in preservation and conservation trades and skills.   |                        | NHA sites, NYS Parks, local parks, local trades organizations/guilds  |          |        |        |        |        | X       |
| Partner with regionally-based youth organizations to connect their programs to the NHA and vice versa (e.g. Boy Scouts of America "Niagara Frontier Trail").   |                        | Youth organizations   |          |        |        | X      |        |         |
| <b>Coordinate and Support NHA-Thematically Relevant Interpretive Programs and Events</b>   |                        |   |          |        |        |        |        |         |
| Develop an application process, including criteria, requirements, and guidelines, for sites in Niagara and Erie Counties to collaborate and participate in the presentation of NHA themes.   |                        | CVNHP, ECNHC, HRVNHA, ANHA, NF UGRR   |          |        | X      |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with agencies on regional interpretation and programming on Olmsted's vision and work.   |                        | NYS Parks, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Partners  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Coordinate NHA- and SHA-wide interpretive presentations and themes of common interest.   |                        | ECNHA, CVNHP, HRVNHA, NF UGRR, SHA  | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Continue the grants program to support thematically-relevant interpretive and educational programs and events.   |                        |   | X        |        |        |        |        |         |
| Collaborate with Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area on regional interpretive programs and themes related to the UGRR   |                        | NF UGRR   | X        |        |        |        |        |         |



Along the New York State Gorge Trail visitors can experience many Niagara River elements such as the whirlpool. Photo credit: NPS Photo



# *Part 3* Appendices





## **Appendix A: The Planning Team – January through April 2013**

### **Niagara Falls National Heritage Area**

#### *Commissioners*

Dr. Thomas A. Chambers, Niagara University (Commission Chair)  
Jeffrey D. Williams, Lewiston Management Group and Niagara Falls Properties (Vice-Chair)  
Margaret-Ann Hanson, former Village of Youngstown Trustee (Executive Committee)  
Willie Dunn, Niagara Falls Housing Authority (Executive Committee)  
Robert H. Borgatti, Niagara County Community College  
Bill Bradberry, former City of Niagara Falls Administrator  
Deborah L. Conway, National Park Service  
Paul A. Dyster, Niagara Greenway Commission, Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York  
Christopher M. Glynn, Maid of the Mist Corporation  
Neil Patterson, Jr., Tuscarora Nation  
John H. Percy, Jr., Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation  
Christopher J. Schoepflin, Empire State Development Corporation  
Mark W. Thomas, New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation  
Dr. Jan H. van Harssel, Niagara University  
Dr. Lillian S. Williams, University of Buffalo

#### *Alternates*

Robert A. Gallucci, Village of Youngstown  
Marjorie E. Gillies, Niagara Falls Beautification Commission  
Michael J. Marra, Village of Lewiston  
Sara Capen, Executive Director

### **National Park Service**

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center  
Joanne Blacoe, Interpretive Planner, Northeast Region  
Michael Liang, Visual Information Specialist, Northeast Region  
Claire Comer, Interpretive Specialist, Shenandoah National Park  
Neal Lewis, Visual Information Specialist, Shenandoah National Park  
Brett Raeburn, Visual Media Assistant, Shenandoah National Park

### **Partners/Stakeholders**

Kelly Lang Buckley, Designer, Niagara Spotlight and Program Director,  
Niagara Arts and Cultural Center

Daniel Davis, Community Activist and Author, Niagara Community Forum

Gretchen Duling, Representative, Village of Youngstown

Catherine L. Emerson, Niagara County Historian, Office of Niagara  
County Historian

Robert Emerson, Executive Director, Old Fort Niagara

Carol Murphy, Executive Director, McClew Interpretive Center at Murphy  
Orchards

Louis Paonessa, Community Affairs Director, New York Power Authority

Ron Peters, Deputy General Manager, Western District, New York Office of  
Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

Barry Virgilio, Environmental Educator 2, Park Interpretive Programs  
Office, New York State Parks

## **Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines**

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/accessibilityGuideVersion2.1.pdf>

## **Appendix C: Works Cited**

Emerson, Robert. “Happy New Year!” What’s New at Old Fort Niagara. Old Fort Niagara E-Newsletter, January 2, 2013.

John Milner Associates, Inc. “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area: Part I - Environmental Assessment.” Submitted to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission, U.S. National Park Service, and Ken Salazar, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, 2012.

John Milner Associates, Inc. “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area: Part II - Management Plan.” Submitted to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission, U.S. National Park Service, and Ken Salazar, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, 2012.

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Niagara National Heritage Area Study: Study Report. Boston, MA: Northeast Region Boston Office Park Planning and Special Studies, 2005.

New York Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. 2012 Monthly Parks Attendance Spreadsheet. January 3, 2013.



## Appendix D: Authorizing Legislation

*This excerpt is taken from the May 8, 2008 Public Law 110-229 also known as the “Consolidated Natural Resource Act of 2008”, which established Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.*

### Subtitle B—Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

New York,  
16 USC 461 note.

#### SEC. 421. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this subtitle include—

(1) to recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled “Niagara National Heritage Area Study” dated 2005;

(2) to preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area;

(3) to promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;

(4) to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;

(5) to enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area;

(6) to conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy; and

(7) to provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National

Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

**SEC. 422. DEFINITIONS.**

In this subtitle:

(1) **COMMISSION.**—The term “Commission” means the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission established under this subtitle.

(2) **GOVERNOR.**—The term “Governor” means the Governor of the State of New York.

(3) **LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.**—The term “local coordinating entity” means the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area designated pursuant to this subtitle.

(4) **MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The term “management plan” means the plan prepared by the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area that specifies actions, policies, strategies, performance goals, and recommendations to meet the goals of the National Heritage Area, in accordance with this subtitle.

(5) **NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.**—The term “National Heritage Area” means the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area established in this subtitle.

(6) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

**SEC. 423. DESIGNATION OF THE NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is hereby established the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

(b) **BOUNDARIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The National Heritage Area shall consist of the area from the western boundary of the town of Wheatfield, New York, extending to the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario, including the city of Niagara Falls, New York, the villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, New York, land and water within the boundaries of the Heritage Area in Niagara County, New York, and any additional thematically related sites within Erie and Niagara Counties, New York, that are identified in the management plan developed under this subtitle.

(2) **MAP.**—The boundaries of the National Heritage Area shall be as generally depicted on the map titled “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area,” and numbered P76/80,000 and dated July, 2006. The map shall be on file and available to the public in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service and the local coordinating entity.

**SEC. 424. MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

(a) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The management plan for the National Heritage Area shall—

(1) describe comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the heritage of the area covered by the National Heritage Area and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the National Heritage Area;

(2) include a description of actions and commitments that Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, private organizations, and citizens will take to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(3) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the National Heritage Area;

(4) include an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area related to the national importance and themes of the National Heritage Area that should be protected, enhanced, interpreted, managed, funded, and developed;

(5) recommend policies and strategies for resource management, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

Recommendations.

(6) describe a program for implementation for the management plan, including—

(A) performance goals;

(B) plans for resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development; and

(C) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any Federal, State, Tribal, or local government agency, organization, business, or individual;

(7) include an analysis of, and recommendations for, means by which Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs may best be coordinated (including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the National Heritage Area) to further the purposes of this subtitle; and

(8) include a business plan that—

(A) describes the role, operation, financing, and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities contained in the management plan; and

(B) provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(b) DEADLINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to develop the management plan after designation as a National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity shall submit the management plan to the Secretary for approval.

(2) TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the management plan is not submitted to the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1), the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for any additional financial assistance under this subtitle until such time as the management plan is submitted to and approved by the Secretary.

(c) APPROVAL OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.—



**Deadline.**

(1) **REVIEW.**—Not later than 180 days after receiving the plan, the Secretary shall review and approve or disapprove the management plan for a National Heritage Area on the basis of the criteria established under paragraph (3).

(2) **CONSULTATION.**—The Secretary shall consult with the Governor before approving a management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(3) **CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.**—In determining whether to approve a management plan for a National Heritage Area, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(A) the local coordinating entity represents the diverse interests of the National Heritage Area, including Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, natural and historic resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, recreational organizations, community residents, and private property owners;

(B) the local coordinating entity—

(i) has afforded adequate opportunity for public and Federal, State, Tribal, and local governmental involvement (including through workshops and hearings) in the preparation of the management plan; and

(ii) provides for at least semiannual public meetings to ensure adequate implementation of the management plan;

(C) the resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development strategies described in the management plan, if implemented, would adequately protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historic, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(D) the management plan would not adversely affect any activities authorized on Federal land under public land laws or land use plans;

(E) the local coordinating entity has demonstrated the financial capability, in partnership with others, to carry out the plan;

(F) the Secretary has received adequate assurances from the appropriate State, Tribal, and local officials whose support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the State, Tribal, and local elements of the management plan; and

(G) the management plan demonstrates partnerships among the local coordinating entity, Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, regional planning organizations, nonprofit organizations, or private sector parties for implementation of the management plan.

(4) **DISAPPROVAL.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary disapproves the management plan, the Secretary—

(i) shall advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons for the disapproval; and

(ii) may make recommendations to the local coordinating entity for revisions to the management plan.

(B) **DEADLINE.**—Not later than 180 days after receiving a revised management plan, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove the revised management plan.

**(5) AMENDMENTS.—**

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—An amendment to the management plan that substantially alters the purposes of the National Heritage Area shall be reviewed by the Secretary and approved or disapproved in the same manner as the original management plan.

(B) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds authorized by this subtitle to implement an amendment to the management plan until the Secretary approves the amendment.

**(6) AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary may—**

(A) provide technical assistance under the authority of this subtitle for the development and implementation of the management plan; and

(B) enter into cooperative agreements with interested parties to carry out this subtitle.

**SEC. 425. EVALUATION; REPORT.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the National Heritage Area under this subtitle the Secretary shall—

(1) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and

(2) prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).

(b) **EVALUATION.**—An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall—

(1) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(A) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the National Heritage Area; and

(B) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area;

(2) analyze the Federal, State, Tribal, and local, and private investments in the National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and

(3) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

(c) **REPORT.**—Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.

**SEC. 426. LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.**

(a) **DESIGNATION.**—The local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area shall be— Effective dates.

(1) for the 5-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this subtitle, the Commission; and

(2) on expiration of the 5-year period described in paragraph (1), a private nonprofit or governmental organization designated by the Commission.

(b) **DUTIES.**—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity, shall—

- Plan.** (1) prepare a management plan for the National Heritage Area, and submit the management plan to the Secretary, in accordance with this subtitle;
- Reports.** (2) submit an annual report to the Secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, specifying—
- (A) the specific performance goals and accomplishments of the local coordinating entity;
  - (B) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity;
  - (C) the amounts and sources of matching funds;
  - (D) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraging; and
  - (E) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year;
- (3) make available for audit for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, all information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds;
- (4) encourage economic viability and sustainability that is consistent with the purposes of the National Heritage Area; and
- (5) coordinate projects, activities, and programs with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.
- (c) **AUTHORITIES.**—For the purposes of preparing and implementing the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity may use Federal funds made available under this subtitle to—
- (1) make grants to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and other parties within the National Heritage Area;
  - (2) enter into cooperative agreements with or provide technical assistance to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, Federal agencies, and other interested parties;
  - (3) hire and compensate staff, including individuals with expertise in—
    - (A) natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resource conservation;
    - (B) economic and community development; and
    - (C) heritage planning;
  - (4) obtain funds or services from any source, including other Federal programs;
  - (5) contract for goods or services; and
  - (6) support activities of partners and any other activities that further the purposes of the National Heritage Area and are consistent with the approved management plan.
- (d) **PROHIBITION ON ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.**—The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds authorized under this subtitle to acquire any interest in real property.

**SEC. 427. NIAGARA FALLS HERITAGE AREA COMMISSION.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established within the Department of the Interior the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission.

(b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Commission shall be composed of 17 members, of whom—



(1) 1 member shall be the Director of the National Park Service (or a designee);

(2) 5 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Governor, from among individuals with knowledge and experience of—

(A) the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the New York Power Authority, the USA Niagara Development Corporation, and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation; or

(B) any successors of the agencies described in subparagraph (A);

(3) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of Niagara Falls, New York;

(4) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Youngstown, New York;

(5) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Lewiston, New York;

(6) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Tuscarora Nation;

(7) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Seneca Nation of Indians; and

(8) 6 members shall be individuals who have an interest in, support for, and expertise appropriate to tourism, regional planning, history and historic preservation, cultural or natural resource management, conservation, recreation, and education, or museum services, of whom—

(A) 4 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the 2 members of the Senate from the State; and

(B) 2 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Member of the House of Representatives whose district encompasses the National Heritage Area.

(c) **TERMS; VACANCIES.—**

(1) **TERM.**—A member of the Commission shall be appointed for a term not to exceed 5 years.

(2) **VACANCIES.—**

(A) **PARTIAL TERM.**—A member appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission shall serve for the remainder of the term for which the predecessor of the member was appointed.

(B) **IN GENERAL.**—A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) **CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—**

(1) **SELECTION.**—The Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among the members of the Commission.

(2) **VICE CHAIRPERSON.**—The Vice Chairperson shall serve as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

(e) **QUORUM.—**

(1) IN GENERAL.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

(2) TRANSACTION.—For the transaction of any business or the exercise of any power of the Commission, the Commission shall have the power to act by a majority vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is in attendance.

(f) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet at least quarterly at the call of—

(A) the Chairperson; or

(B) a majority of the members of the Commission.

(2) NOTICE.—Notice of Commission meetings and agendas for the meetings shall be published in local newspapers that are distributed throughout the National Heritage Area.

(3) APPLICABLE LAW.—Meetings of the Commission shall be subject to section 552b of title 5, United States Code.

(g) AUTHORITIES OF THE COMMISSION.—In addition to the authorities otherwise granted in this subtitle, the Commission may—

(1) request and accept from the head of any Federal agency, on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, any personnel of the Federal agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission;

(2) request and accept from the head of any State agency or any agency of a political subdivision of the State, on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of the agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission;

(3) seek, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, grants, or donations of money, personal property, or services; and

(4) use the United States mails in the same manner as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(h) DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, in addition to the duties otherwise listed in this subtitle, the Commission shall assist in the transition of the management of the National Heritage Area from the Commission to the local coordinating entity designated under this subtitle.

(i) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(j) GIFTS.—For purposes of section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, any gift or charitable contribution to the Commission shall be considered to be a charitable contribution or gift to the United States.

(k) USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS.—Except as provided for the leasing of administrative facilities under subsection (g)(1), the Commission may not use Federal funds made available to the Commission under this subtitle to acquire any real property or interest in real property.

**SEC. 428. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this subtitle affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(b) **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.**—The head of any Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on a National Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity to the maximum extent practicable.

(c) **OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) modifies, alters, or amends any law or regulation authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;

(2) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of a National Heritage Area; or

(3) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

**SEC. 429. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.**

Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) abridges the rights of any property owner (whether public or private), including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the National Heritage Area;

(2) requires any property owner to permit public access (including access by Federal, State, Tribal, or local agencies) to the property of the property owner, or to modify public access or use of property of the property owner under any other Federal, State, Tribal, or local law;

(3) alters any duly adopted land use regulation, approved land use plan, or other regulatory authority of any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency, or conveys any land use or other regulatory authority to any local coordinating entity, including but not necessarily limited to development and management of energy, water, or water-related infrastructure;

(4) authorizes or implies the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(5) diminishes the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the National Heritage Area; or

(6) creates any liability, or affects any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on the private property.

**SEC. 430. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Funds so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

(b) **LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED.**—Not more than \$15,000,000 may be appropriated to carry out this subtitle.

(c) **COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.**—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this subtitle shall be not more than 50 percent; the non-Federal contribution may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.



**SEC. 431. USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES.**

Nothing in this subtitle shall preclude the local coordinating entity from using Federal funds available under other laws for the purposes for which those funds were authorized.

**SEC. 432. SUNSET FOR GRANTS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.**

The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this subtitle terminates on the date that is 15 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

## Appendix E: Interpretive Theme Matrix

The theme matrix proposed in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan identifies stories associated with the significance of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Each theme is described by a title, theme statement, examples of concepts/ideas appropriate to the theme, and examples of topics and stories that fit within each theme. These four sections in the matrix allow readers with different learning styles and interests to get a broader picture of what may be encompassed in each theme.

The theme statements adhere to accepted tenets of interpretive theme construction. That is, primary interpretive themes:

- Derive from the purpose and national significance.
- Capture and convey the meaning of a place not solely facts.
- Open minds to new ideas and introduce multiple points of view.
- Suggest connections, meanings, and relevance.
- Link universal concepts and experiences with tangible resources.
- Provide a foundation for more specific programs, presentations, and exhibits.
- Are expressed in single sentences.

Concepts and ideas are written as objectives to help managers and interpreters align personal services, exhibits, or other media with area significance. Although interpretive themes should be relatively timeless, both the concepts/ideas and the topics/stories can be added to or changed when new information comes to light.

Because the objectives can be used for programs, exhibits, and media, they can save effort and eliminate the stress that comes with the pressure to develop brand-new, original themes for every interpretive program or product.

These concepts, ideas, and topics are a representative, partial list. They are examples that could illustrate the concepts. They are not all-inclusive, in fact, they never could be, nor are they intended to exclude any topic. An interpretive theme is successful only if other topics and stories can be included within it.

# Interpretive Theme Matrix

## #1 — Natural Phenomenon: Landscape and Natural History

### Theme Statement

*Niagara Falls is a natural phenomenon that is overwhelming in its magnitude and deeply embedded in popular consciousness. Over Niagara Falls courses the outflow of four of the Great Lakes.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

- Explain and illustrate the geological basis for the dramatic spectacle that visitors come to see and relate it to the Niagara Escarpment and the entire Great Lakes region.
- Explain the natural history of the Niagara Falls, River, and Gorge. Outline the region's geology, the hydrologic processes that have created the Falls and Gorge, and the river corridor and Lake Ontario ecosystems with their distinctive plant and animal communities.
- Trace the changes that have occurred to the landscape over time, including changes experienced through human development over the past three hundred years.
- Make connections between the state of the landscape today and ramifications and urgency for its stewardship and conservation into the future.

#### Geological Forces

Describe and illustrate how landscape features formed from layers of sand, silt, and clay that were deposited 450 million years ago. Explain how the Niagara Escarpment is an extensive landform visible as a line of steep slopes and long bluffs extending from New York State through Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

Show how, over time, the Niagara Gorge was a channel cut through the escarpment by the Niagara River. The present location of the Niagara River is a direct result of that erosive action.

#### Unique Ecosystems

Describe how the microclimates and environmental conditions created by the Niagara River and Gorge support a unique range of plant and animal ecosystems and explain why that is valuable.

#### Changes in the Landscape

Trace how human activity has dramatically altered the landscape in the vicinity of the Niagara River over the past 300 years and with it the nature and extent of the vegetation that occurs here. Compare and contrast the Haudenosaunee concepts of land use and those of European settlers. Show that today, only small, isolated remnants of the region's pre-settlement plant communities remain.

#### Landscape Stewardship

Describe how the 'Free Niagara' movement of the 1870s led to creation of the Niagara Reservation, conservation and stewardship of the Niagara River; a landscape that has attracted strong public interest and action. Connect continued interest today with inspiration taken from the views of the Haudenosaunee.

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- Unparalleled resource
- Geological processes
- Falls
- Rapids
- Gorge
- Escarpment
- Unusual plant and animal communities in microclimates
- Necklace of state parks, local parks, and public spaces that border the Niagara River from LaSalle on to Fort Niagara
- Niagara Falls State Park
- Trail systems
- Niagara River Greenway
- Niagara Gorge Discovery Center
- Geology
- Landscapes
- Joseph Davis State Park bird habitat and natural ecosystems
- LaSalle and Cayuga Islands
- Fort Niagara State Park
- Four Mile Creek State Park



## #2 — Tourism and Recreation: The Role of Tourism in Development of the Region

### Theme Statement

*Niagara Falls has been an international cultural icon with different meaning and significance to different people over time.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

- Explore the development of Niagara Falls as a cultural symbol and tourist attraction. Describe this development in the context of a history of tourism that extends from early European and American encounters with the Falls to the growth of mass tourism, the honeymoon phenomenon, and modern efforts to revitalize the City of Niagara Falls. Describe some of the pressures and/or trade-offs between goals of conservation and development for tourism.
- Provide examples of how Niagara offers an exceptional opportunity to examine a range of American responses to the natural world. These stories include the nineteenth century conservation movement; Frederick Law Olmsted's efforts to protect what has become today's Niagara Falls State Park; and, the park's relationship to the development of the National Park System.
- Describe the traditions of outrageous behavior at the Falls, including such activities as high-wire acts and going over the Falls in a barrel. Connect these events to the context of their times.
- Portray the changing relationships and responses of the city and the region to the falls and to the tourism it generates. Show how tourism continues to be a relevant part of the city's ongoing program of revitalization and renewal.

#### Wilderness and the American Experience

- Provide examples of how from their first encounters with the Falls until well into the 19th -century, Europeans and their American descendants beheld Niagara with awe, perceiving it as an outstanding expression of the "sublime" and how the spectacle was emblematic of the New World, in which everything appeared outsized and limitless.
- Illustrate ways in which Niagara exemplified the concept of wilderness, with both the grandeur and terror it represented.

#### A Magnet for Visitors

- Describe how Niagara Falls has been a favored destination of travelers for two centuries and can be used as a representative of the evolution of tourism in the nation as a whole.

#### Honeymoon Capital

- Explain why and the impact of Niagara Falls as it became known as the Honeymoon Capital of the World in the late 19th - and early 20th -centuries. Describe the cultural impact as thousands of newlyweds made the ritual pilgrimage to the Falls to inaugurate their lives together.

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- Mass tourism
- Honeymoons
- Frederick Law Olmsted
- Old Fall Street and Rainbow Boulevard revitalization
- Travel destination
- Picturesque landscapes
- Great Gorge Route trolley line
- Ice Bridge
- The Buttery Elevators
- National Park System
- Conservation
- Economic benefits of tourism
- Stunts using the falls-daredevils
- Tourism vs. conservation
- Terror of "wildness"
- Economic pressures
- Government roles in development and conservation

## Continued: #2 — Tourism and Recreation

### Theme Statement

*Niagara Falls has been an international cultural icon with different meaning and significance to different people over time.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

#### Commercial Exploitation and Sensationalism

- Illustrate how even in its earliest incarnation, commercialism at Niagara Falls took on a seamy and aggressive tone with unscrupulous entrepreneurs on both sides of the river competing with each other in cutthroat fashion in attracting and extracting money from unwary visitors. Describe the ways that tasteless and sensational nature of the commercial exploitation took on a life of its own.

#### Daredevils

- Describe the motivations, purpose, and effects of individuals who contributed to the sensational spectacle by undertaking life-threatening feats and dangerous publicity stunts. Tight-rope walking and descending the Falls in a barrel were most prominent among the ways that publicity seekers sought public attention and acclaim. Explore the lives and times of these daredevils and what brought them to their moments of fame with the falls.

#### Creating the Niagara Reservation

- Describe the circumstances, issues, and players related to how Niagara emerged as a major battleground between divergent visions of the value and meaning of the Falls and the natural environment in general. Describe these divergent views—how educated, urban, and progressive forces battled to protect the integrity of the natural wonder in the face of economic exploitation by tourism, manufacturing, and hydropower generation.
- Explain and describe the efforts that created the Niagara State Reservation in 1885 (now the oldest state park). This was an early triumph of the American conservation movement, and a major influence on the creation of national parks.

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- Mass tourism
- Honeymoons
- Frederick Law Olmsted
- Old Fall Street and Rainbow Boulevard revitalization
- Travel destination
- Picturesque landscapes
- Great Gorge Route trolley line
- Ice Bridge
- The Buttery Elevators
- National Park System
- Conservation
- Economic benefits of tourism
- Stunts using the falls-daredevils
- Tourism vs. conservation
- Terror of “wildness”
- Economic pressures
- Government roles in development and conservation



### #3 — POWER AND INDUSTRY

#### Niagara's Role in Using Electricity as a Power Source and How It Transformed Twentieth-Century American Life

##### Theme Statement

*Niagara Falls was the place where the large-scale generation of electricity was first undertaken with tremendous implications for changes in the American way of life.*

##### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

- Explain the origins of large-scale generation of electricity in the Niagara region; explain how and why it was pioneered here.
- Describe the “before” widespread use of electricity and the implications it had to change the American way of life.
- Trace the first development and installation of large electrical generators, the first long distance commercial use of electrical power, and the attraction of cutting edge industries that have shaped human experience in the twentieth century.
- Connect the story of harnessing hydroelectric power at the Falls to stories of major technological advancements and the bi-national cooperation necessary to do this.
- Describe the industrial development that took place as a result of Niagara power.
- Explore the effects of pollution caused by industry and today's efforts of environmental remediation.

##### The Age of Electricity

- Describe how the ability to generate and transmit electricity on a large scale was made possible at Niagara Falls through invention, competition, and entrepreneurial brinksmanship undertaken on a world-wide scale. Describe the people, events, circumstances and conflicting agendas surrounding these innovations.
- Explore the impact of hydroelectric power on human society, past, present and future. Explain how hydroelectric power is increasingly understood as a clean energy alternative.

##### Better Things for Better Living... Through Chemistry

- Illustrate how availability of large amounts of inexpensive hydroelectric power attracted new industries to Niagara Falls in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Describe how new industrial processes were developed using temperature levels never before possible, and how they resulted in a technological revolution.
- Describe how the electrochemical industry was created “out of nothing” and had far reaching effects on the production of primary materials and the manufacturing of goods that used those materials. Discuss relevancy today.

##### Utopian Vision

- Explore how the dream of unlimited power available at Niagara Falls created an exuberant optimism that seemed to be borne out in the cutting-edge technologies, new products, and rapid growth and prosperity of the city. Describe the impact on Niagara Falls

##### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- Old Falls
- Rainbow Boulevard
- The terminus of the Hydraulic Canal at the edge of the Niagara Gorge
- Schoellkopf Power Station and Aluminum Company of America plant
- 1956 collapse of the Schoellkopf Power Station
- Struggle between public and private power companies before and after the collapse
- Love Canal
- Environmental Movement
- Adams Transformer House
- Buffalo Avenue
- Birdsall Holly (or Holley) invention of pressurized fire suppression systems (fire hydrants) and centralized steam heating
- Fruit dryers
- Model City
- Bell Aerospace – WWII and the moon lander
- Technological advancement
- International and bi-national cooperation
- Science and technology of hydroelectric power
- Nikola Tesla, Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, J.P. Morgan
- Environmental activists



## Continued: #3 - POWER AND INDUSTRY

### Niagara's Role in Using Electricity as a Power Source and How It Transformed Twentieth-Century American Life

#### Theme Statement

*Niagara Falls was the place where the large-scale generation of electricity was first undertaken with tremendous implications for changes in the American way of life.*

#### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

as an industrial metropolis that spawned utopian visions of the future.

#### The People of Niagara Falls

- Describe how the city's rapid growth and expanding workforce attracted many new residents to Niagara Falls, representing all levels of society and a diverse range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Explain, compare, and contrast their cultural traditions that established local ethnic communities that flourished and remain vibrant today.

#### Robert Moses and the Power Authority

- Outline how, by the mid-twentieth century, the electrical revolution nationwide had caught up Niagara Falls, making Niagara Falls' position no longer unique. Explain how, through a bi-national agreement, a new vision for regional hydro-electric power generation was established and new power plants were constructed. Show: how in the City of Niagara Falls, large-scale changes to the city's urban fabric were undertaken by Robert Moses amid great controversy. Describe why these changes did not halt the city's industrial decline, as industries began to moving to other locations - because Niagara Falls' position was no longer unique.

#### Birth of America's Environmental Movement

- Describe how Niagara's industrial prosperity had unintended consequences such as new technology and industrial processes that led to the production of unusable byproducts and industrial waste on a massive scale. Describe how workers were exposed to extreme health hazards through lack of knowledge and recognition of the need to take necessary precautions. Explore waste products disposal policy and systems; how they were disposed of in an expedient manner that was dangerous to public health. Explore how the publicity created by local activists at Love Canal contributed to the birth of the environmental movement and a national response to address problems related to industrial hazards.

#### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- Old Falls
- Rainbow Boulevard
- The terminus of the Hydraulic Canal at the edge of the Niagara Gorge
- Schoellkopf Power Station and Aluminum Company of America plant
- 1956 collapse of the Schoellkopf Power Station
- Struggle between public and private power companies before and after the collapse
- Love Canal
- Environmental Movement
- Adams Transformer House
- Buffalo Avenue
- Birdsall Holly (or Holley) invention of pressurized fire suppression systems (fire hydrants) and centralized steam heating
- Fruit dryers
- Model City
- Bell Aerospace - WWII and the moon lander
- Technological advancement
- International and bi-national cooperation
- Science and technology of hydroelectric power
- Nikola Tesla, Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, J.P. Morgan
- Environmental activists

## #4 — Borderland/Border Crossing

### Theme Statement

*The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

- Describe military activity in the region from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Explain the importance of the Niagara River as a passage between the Great Lakes and the interior of the continent.
- Explore the significance of the river as an international boundary – both in terms of the friendly relationship between the United States and Canada and in the development of transportation facilities on either side of the river.
- Describe the importance of the Niagara Frontier and access to Canada in the operation of the Underground Railroad during the nineteenth century.
- Tell the history of Indian tribes in the region, including the Tuscarora Nation.
- Trace the story of the Niagara Frontier and the region's role as a contested borderland and boundary in which empires, nations, and peoples with conflicting perceptions and interests vied.

#### The Western Door

Introduce the history and culture of the Haudenosaunee.

"Haudenosaunee" is the Native American term for the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy; this word also translates to "People who are building an extended house". The Haudenosaunee viewed the longhouse as the basis of their relationships with each other and outside nations. The Seneca, as the westernmost Iroquois nation, served as doorkeepers of the longhouse's western end; while the Mohawk protected the eastern side. Haudenosaunee control of the crucial lands, their bounty, and their ability to grant trade rights made the Iroquois Confederacy one of the most powerful Native American nations east of the Mississippi River.

#### The Seneca:

Explain that for over a thousand years the Seneca people have lived between the eastern Great Lakes and the Finger Lakes region. Describe what they have witnessed, experienced, and endured; the many changes they've seen over these centuries; and, emphasize their continued residence in the region. Provide the Seneca people opportunities to share their proud history and culture as a Nation. Make the connection that like their ancient ancestors, they treasure the beauty of their lands and the bounty of nature; and, they have also built a strong, sovereign Nation focused on improving the lives of their people.

#### The Tuscarora

Explain how the people of the Tuscarora Nation came to migrate to eastern New York from North Carolina in the early 18th century to join with the Haudenosaunee. Describe how later in the 18th century, many Tuscarora moved west to the Niagara region. Their story is an amaz-

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- War of 1812
- Underground Railroad
- Old Fort Niagara
- Battle of Belle-Famille
- Little Fort Niagara in Porter Park
- LaSalle's 1679 expedition
- Skirmish at Devil's Hole
- Portage around Niagara Falls
- Siege of Fort Niagara at Four Mile Creek
- Lower Niagara River
- Old Fort Niagara
- Fort Schlosser
- Porter Family
- Youngstown and Lewiston
- U.S. Customhouse
- Whirlpool Rapids Railroad Bridge
- Old Falls Street
- Cataract House
- International Hotel
- Ferry crossing
- Village of Lewiston
- Murphy Orchards
- William Morgan and the Masons
- The Fenian Raid
- The 1837 Canadian Rebellion and the "Caroline" incident

*Additional stories continued on next page.*



## Continued: #4 — Borderland/Border Crossing

### Theme Statement

*The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

ing tale of survival; and, is testimony to the adaptability of the Tuscarora Nation. Make the connection that today the Tuscarora continue to operate under a traditional form of government with respect for civility and law, a tradition of sharing and giving back, and stewardship for the land.

#### *The Niagara River*

Describe the ways in which as a portage between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, Niagara Falls and the Niagara River were significant to the Haudenosaunee. Explain how by the mid-18th century, the region was controlled by the Seneca, and the portage provided work for Seneca men. Provide opportunities to learn about or experience the oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee that tells of spirits living beneath the Niagara Falls, called the Thunder Beings, saving a young woman from taking her own life, a story that was later romanticized into "the Maid of the Mist." Describe that evidence of fishing culture predating Seneca and Tuscarora arrival along the Niagara River can be found in many archeological sites. And how permanent residency of the Tuscarora along the river revitalized the Haudenosaunee occupation of these ancient fishing sites.

#### *The Ganonyok*

Describe how the Haudenosaunee view the natural world and its bounty as a gift and their community as connected to a living earth and a spiritual universe; how the Haudenosaunee people give thanks each day through the Ganonyok, a daily expression of gratitude that serves as a reminder to acknowledge and appreciate all things and how the Ganonyok reinforces the connection that people have to the world around them.

#### Clash of Empires

Explain why the Niagara River was of international strategic significance as the gateway to the interior of the North American continent by way of Great Lakes; how this route gave French forces access from the St. Lawrence River Valley to the Ohio, Illinois, and Mississippi River Valleys. If they could control it, British settlement could be contained to the thin line of colonies along the east coast.

#### *Niagara Portage*

Describe how access to the interior of the continent by way of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River, and Great Lakes required portage around the Falls. Explore the economic and strategic significance of the portage was well known to the Haudenosaunee, early European explorers, military forces, and frontier settlers. Explain how after the attack at Devil's Hole in 1763, Seneca attempts to control this route as part of their role as 'Keepers of the Western Door' became less successful and British influence gained power.

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- HMS Ontario which sunk on October 31, 1780 killing all hands – Colonel Bolton of Fort Niagara, his wife, British soldiers, and American POWs.
- Betsy and Andrew Doyle, Hot Shot Heroine of Fort Niagara and her husband (War of 1812)
- Tuscarora beadwork and beadworkers



## Theme Statement

*The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character.*

## Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

### Siege of Fort Niagara

Describe the circumstances, players, and effects of the nineteen-day siege of Fort Niagara by British forces in 1759; explain how it was the climax of a century-long struggle for the northern gateway to the interior of the North American continent. Describe the bloody repulse of French troops sent to end the siege at La Belle Famille; and, discuss how subsequent capitulation of the fort ended all hopes of French ambitions within the Great Lakes. Describe the impact on the Haudenosaunee; and, relate how the long standing Haudenosaunee strategy of playing European nations against each other lacked leverage with the French loss of Fort Niagara and North America.

### Revolutionary Frontier

Illustrate how during the American Revolution, the British base at Fort Niagara served as a safe haven for those loyal to the British, whether European settlers or Haudenosaunee villagers, and a base for offensive operations against colonial settlements on the frontier.

### Neighbor against Neighbor

Describe how combined colonial and Native American forces organized at Fort Niagara conducted raids against colonial settlements in the Mohawk Valley and northeastern Pennsylvania, their former neighbors, in an escalating cycle of violence and atrocities.

### Division of the Six Nations

Describe the effects of the American Revolution on the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations). Explain how active participation by most Haudenosaunee tribes on the British side and some on the American side (through raids on the frontier) led to the targeting of their villages in central New York by American forces. The Tuscarora fought on both sides. Following the war, the Haudenosaunee were divided; some were moved to Ontario, while others stayed in New York. Post war treaties shrank Haudenosaunee lands to a few scattered reservations, opening Western New York for settlement by Europeans.

### War of 1812

Explore how, as a boundary between the United States and British-held Canada, the Niagara River was a scene of conflict in which residents were deeply engaged. Explain the devastation: villages on both sides were burned; the British occupied Fort Niagara and neutralized the countryside south to Buffalo; and, discuss how the Haudenosaunee people fought each other, as the war forced them to choose sides with either the United States or Great Britain. List the major battles that occurred near the river's 35-mile length, and describe how the border returned to its pre-war status, following the Treaty of Ghent.

## Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- War of 1812
- Underground Railroad
- Old Fort Niagara
- Battle of Belle-Famille
- Little Fort Niagara in Porter Park
- LaSalle's 1679 expedition
- Skirmish at Devil's Hole
- Portage around Niagara Falls
- Siege of Fort Niagara at Four Mile Creek
- Lower Niagara River
- Old Fort Niagara
- Fort Schlosser
- Porter Family
- Youngstown and Lewiston
- U.S. Customhouse
- Whirlpool Rapids Railroad Bridge
- Old Falls Street
- Cataract House
- International Hotel
- Ferry crossing
- Village of Lewiston
- Murphy Orchards
- William Morgan and the Masons
- The Fenian Raid
- The 1837 Canadian Rebellion and the "Caroline" incident

*Additional stories continued on next page.*

## Continued: #4 — Borderland/Border Crossing

### Theme Statement

*The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character.*

### Concepts

Examples of concepts that may be explored within each theme.  
These are written as objectives.\*

#### Crossing the Niagara Gorge

Show how the Niagara River and Gorge was an important crossing point into Canada for fugitives following the Underground Railroad. For the fugitive freedom seekers who passed through the Niagara Frontier, the physical act of crossing the Niagara River represented the final act of courage and determination at the end of a long, arduous journey.

#### Power, Struggle, and Freedom

Discuss the issues of how the Niagara Frontier was contested ground in the struggle between established economic and political interests that supported or opposed the institution of American slavery. Explore the Underground Railroad network that provided a path for freedom for many; and, helped to undermine and eventually overturn the powerful and embedded institution of American slavery.

#### Destination: Niagara Falls

Describe why the Niagara Frontier was the ultimate destination for many fugitive enslaved peoples and represented the end of their perilous journey to freedom. Trace how many of those individuals remained in, or returned to, Niagara Falls and helped to shape the physical, economic, and social landscape of the City.

#### The Past is Always Present

Reflect how Niagara Falls' past includes the fierce struggle between freedom and slavery in the mid nineteenth century, the resolve of fugitives to gain their freedom, and the proud dignity of the settlers and residents who helped to shape the present form and character of the City. Explore if/how the past has relevance to the contemporary experience of Niagara Falls, including its physical imprint on the urban landscape and the community's collective memory.

### Topics and Stories

Examples of topics and stories that could be included within the theme.\*

- HMS Ontario which sunk on October 31, 1780 killing all hands
  - Colonel Bolton of Fort Niagara, his wife, British soldiers, and American POWs.
- Betsy and Andrew Doyle, Hot Shot Heroine of Fort Niagara and her husband (War of 1812)
- Tuscarora beadwork and beadworkers





Niagara Falls National Heritage Area  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Interior



NIAGARA  
FALLS  
NATIONAL  
HERITAGE  
AREA



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area  
P.O. Box 1932  
Timon Hall, Room 125  
Niagara University, NY 14109

716-286-8579

[www.discoverniagara.org](http://www.discoverniagara.org)  
[www.nps.gov/nifa](http://www.nps.gov/nifa)

